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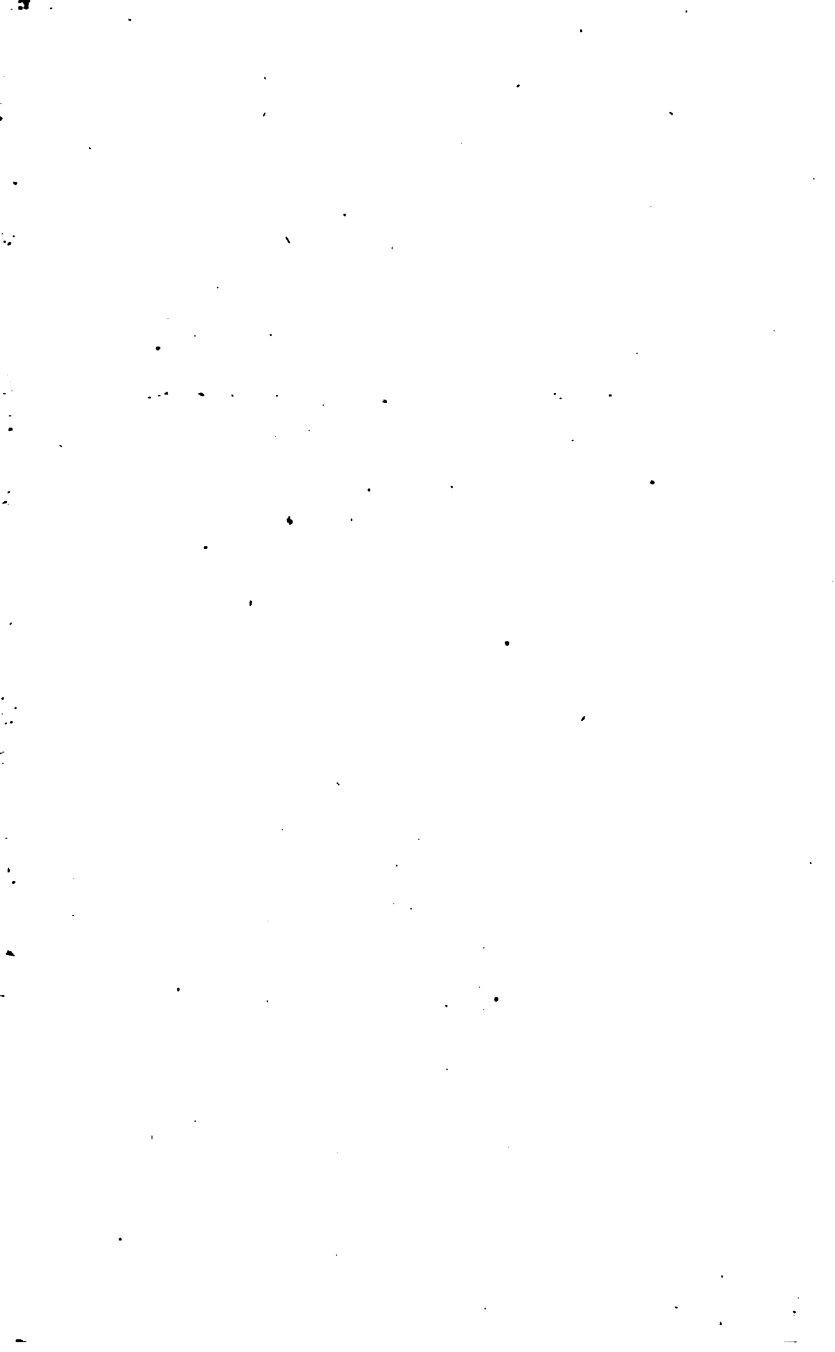
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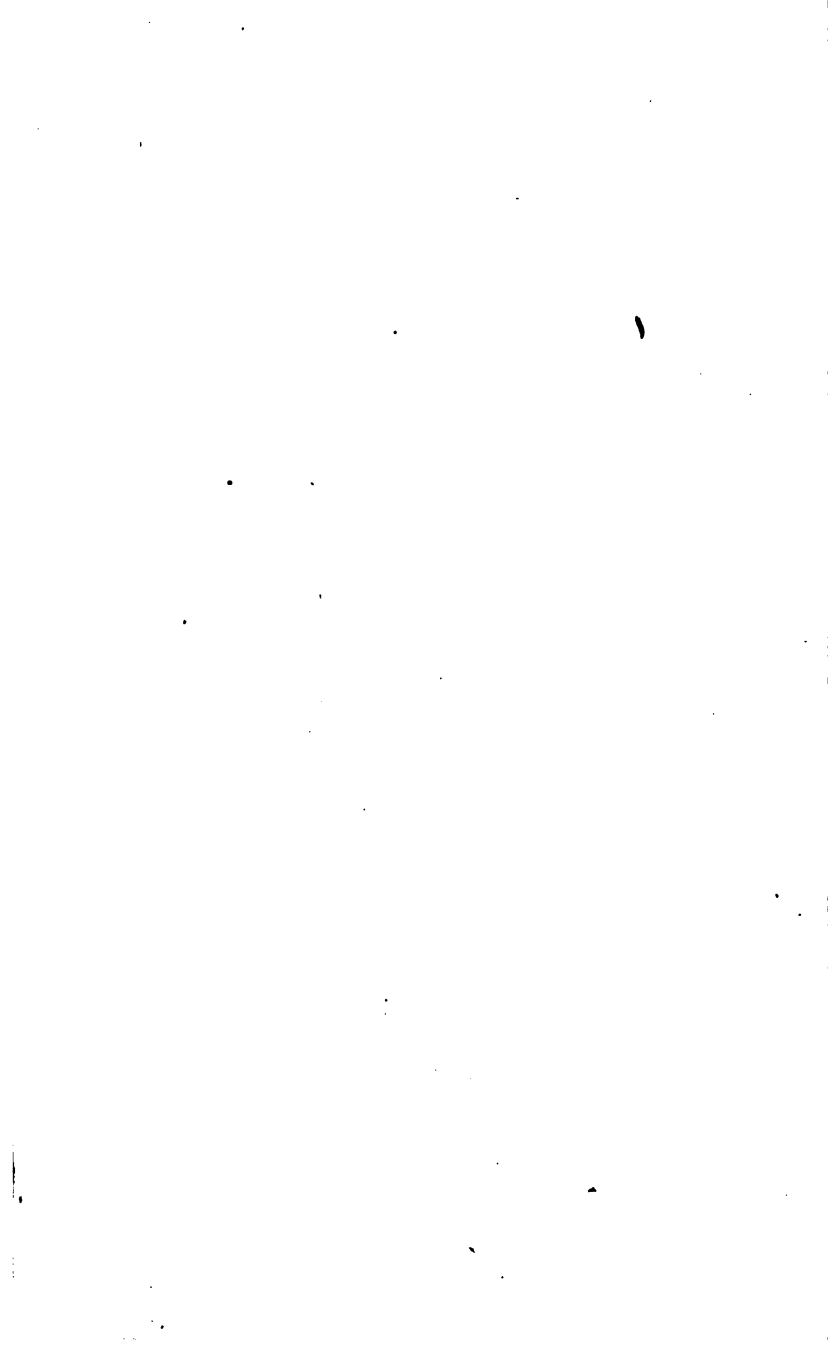
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THE  
CONVENT AND THE HAREM.

BY

MADAME PISANI,

AUTHOR OF "THE BANKER LORD," "VANDELEUR," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE

CONVENT AND THE HAREM.

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CHAPTER I.

WHEN Nino returned for the repast which we should now call dinner, from the hour, Beatrice and Bianca perceived that he was somewhat excited and disturbed. On anxiously inquiring the cause, they could not but perceive that he evidently wished to conceal it: but Beatrice, who became but the more anxious to learn it, and who excelled in cross-examination, elicited at last that the surprise which had been slightly felt the evening before, at no news of any sort having arrived of the departed army, was now converted into a sort of vague alarm and anticipation of some disaster having occurred, arising no one knew where, nor founded upon what.



“Pooh!” exclaimed Beatrice. “Either you are not telling all, or I must say you are very silly to put on such a countenance and manner for idle surmises; but that indeed”—and by these last three words we would endeavour to express that untranslatable Italian *già*, to which not only no word, but scarcely any sentence in our language can compare in force and expression, for this reason, that that apparently simple, and certainly short monosyllable, is made to serve for almost every purpose to which language can be applied, and serves them well, as all will bear witness who have passed some time in Italy. I say *in Italy*, for it is confined to no town or province, so essentially is it a part of the language itself. Without the slightest exaggeration, the single word *già* as they use it, is capable of expressing the fondest love, the fiercest hate, the highest compliment, the most odious suspicions,—and who that has ever heard can forget the world of sympathy, conviction, accordance, and all else that, while one is relating a circumstance to an Italian, is expressed in the, to us, inconceivably rapid but varying intonation with which they reiterate

'già, già, già, già,' sometimes five or even six times together."

As Beatrice now uttered it once and paused, no one could mistake that she meant to say that silliness in her husband was nothing to create surprise. Too well accustomed to such compliments to notice them in any way, Nino merely replied that it was perfectly true that no one seemed able to account for the panic that had seized upon the people, but that such was too general not to have some foundation either in fact or in presentiment.

"Presentiment!" repeated Beatrice, scornfully. "So long as it be confined to that it is all nonsense; and therefore, I do beg, Nino, that you will not spoil our ball by going round and entertaining our guests with such *presentiments*."

Nino shrugged his shoulders, another essential part of the Italian language, and showed his disposition to oblige his wife by drinking more wine than usual.

When the ladies retired to dress, Bianca found Adelaida full fraught with the same news, only differently related—she having been assured that at daybreak a spirit in white was seen flitting from belfry to belfry of all the churches, and

ringing the bells, though mortal ears were not permitted to hear them,—while others said, it was *that one* “quella” as she persisted in denominating Genivra, that sprang from one to the other to ring the joy-bells because the Guelphs were all killed. And “*il padrone!*” \* would that mean that he—?” and the girl stopped not from the unconscious doubt betrayed or rather expressed, of Ugolino’s political principles, but of that of his death.

Bianca said all she could to silence or laugh away such wild exaggerations.

“I fear,” she said, “Sattarello sometimes amuses himself with your credulity, Adelaida.”

“Maybe he does, sometimes, Signorina — and indeed, I know he does ; for sometimes he cannot keep from laughing himself ; but this really is true, that Montefeltro has been closeted with the Archbishop for ever so long, and that all of a sudden he has sent orders to his soldiers that are without the walls to be in readiness to march off immediately with him.”

The girl’s assurances alone that this news was really true, would have had little effect upon Bianca ; but combined with her brother’s pre-

\* Literally, “the master.”

vious observations, it assumed importance in her eyes, and in fact, as is generally the case, these vague, floating, intangible rumours were not without more foundation than the incredulous or unimaginative are willing to assign them. Sattarello had been dispatched to Leghorn, to be ready to catch the first news from Naples ; but, as his hopes of a speedy marriage with the good, prudent, and merry-hearted Adelaida depended on his soon being able to afford, as he expressed it, to give up his present doubtful profession, he never confined himself precisely to the task assigned him, when he could hope by extra service to gain extra guerdon. On this occasion, as he plodded his way to Leghorn, making it a rule as he always did, to fall into discourse with every one he met, with whom it was possible to do so, he heard some rumours respecting a disagreement between the commanders of the Pisan fleet at Porto Pisano, where they were to wait for some further intelligence of the movements of the enemies, whom it was desired above all things to meet at Meloria, where the famous battle had been fought and won nearly fifty years before, in the hope perhaps that the association of ideas might have

a strong effect, though of an opposite nature, upon both armies.

This news led Sattarello to think that he might there learn something yet more interesting to his patron than news from Sicily, which must in any case come to his ears with little loss of time. To the Porto Pisano, accordingly, he bent his steps, and felt himself amply repaid by the information he there acquired. When the fleet, as had been previously agreed on, anchored in the bay, a boat had been dispatched by Ugolino, as a sort of vidette, towards Genoa, in order to learn what was really the position of the enemy ; but, while it was absent, a report was spread that the number of the Genoese vessels, which had been one hundred, and on which those of Pisa had been regulated, had suddenly and unexpectedly been considerably augmented.

This news was treated by Ugolino as idle and unfounded, and from that moment all communication with the land was strictly prohibited, on the pretence that as a boat had been dispatched to reconnoitre, it was unwise to allow the minds of the men to be disturbed by rumours which, whether true or false, could not be relied on

as authentic. Of the truth of the above, however, all doubt was soon removed, not, by the return of their own boat indeed, but by one which was seen struggling towards them in the distance, rowing as if for life against a strong wind, and with a black banner floating in sign of evil tidings. When she at length arrived, it was to confirm the news of the sudden and considerable augmentation of the enemy's vessels, though no one could tell from whence that augmentation had arrived, the boat having been immediately dispatched by the governor of Piombino, in order to meet and give this notice to the Pisan fleet. It was indeed such as to create the utmost anxiety in every experienced commander; for they well knew that with the utmost efforts the republic had been able to make, in fitting out the same number of galleys as that they were informed the Genoese proposed bringing to the battle, much was still wanting of equality in men and ammunition, which they could only look to extra bravery to counterbalance.

A council of war was accordingly held on board the "Capitana;" for still Ugolino persisted in forbidding all intercourse with the shore,

which was the cause of no news arriving in Pisa, except such disjointed rumours as the Piombino boatmen had been able to collect or conjecture, and repeat, according as it struck their fancies. The voice of the council was unanimous, with the exception of Ugolino, that they ought not to proceed to meet the enemy in open sea, where he could bring his additional numbers into play, but wait for him in the harbour of Porto Pisano, where, besides the difficulty of his entering with all his galleys at once, the Pisans would have the protection of their excellently manned walls and fortresses.

To this reasoning Ugolino replied with compliments to the Pisan honour and bravery, which, he said, would but shine out the more brilliantly from additional difficulties ; and when, unable by such arguments to convince those who had the life of the republic sincerely at heart, he suddenly pronounced that the question was one of too deep importance to be decided without more time for reflection ; declared his intention of remaining where they were, at all events for that night ; of calling a new council of war at break of day, when each should have had time maturely to

weigh the matter, and broke up the present sitting.

The following morning he put his power of generalissimo into full force, by ordering the fleet to proceed to meet the enemy without having exchanged a word farther on the subject with any one.

Such was the news which, with some slight exaggerations and variations, Sattarello collected at Porto Pisano ; and with which he hastened back to Pisa, in order to impart them to Lancia, —he arrived as they were preparing to set out for Visconti's ball.

With what feelings the admiral received the tidings may be easily imagined ; but, as it was then impossible to take any step in consequence, he was obliged to content himself with communicating to Montefeltro what he had heard, and endeavouring to follow his advice by concealing his additional anxiety, as well as he might, from general observation.

In the mean time, Bianca, having received Adelaida's version of the facts, while engaged at her toilet, though, in every possible point, perhaps, the very antipodes of the old admiral, was thrown into a state of trepidation and nervous



excitement, which, by heightening her colour, added to her Madonna like beauty all that it was possible the most fastidious could admit it wanted, namely, additional animation ; and the effect was such as to render uncontrollable, in the faithful abigail, a sort of hysterical giggle, which, as the process of dressing advanced towards its completion, she had been vainly endeavouring to suppress. At last, when Bianca believed that there only remained the silver veil to be thrown partially over her fair and finely turned head, as Adelaida advanced with it she was somewhat surprised to observe attached thereto an extremely tasteful, but, at that time, very peculiar ornament for the head, in the shape of a crown, formed of silver and gold wire, through which were interwoven some of Bianca's valuable gems.

"What is this?" she asked, hesitating to allow it to be placed upon her head.

"It is a crown," Adelaida replied, with an affectation of nonchalance ; which, however, but ill-concealed the apprehension of opposition.

"I see it is a crown," Bianca answered ; "but I have not seen any one wear such, Adelaida ; and although I really give you credit

for your good taste, I should not like to be the first to introduce a fashion so particular."

"And who should, if not you, my lady? But, as you choose to make so little of yourself, let me assure you that it is not so new as you think. I have been about, and I know that even to-night other ladies will have the same sort of head-dresses; just try it on to please me."

And as Bianca could not refuse, she once more gazed, for a moment, rather with pleased astonishment, at her own loveliness.

"Well, my lady?" asked the girl, now completely hysterical with delight.

"It certainly suits me. Can you really give me your word, Adelaida, that I shall not be the only one wearing such to-night?"

"I do give you my word, and ten words, that there will be many others like it," said the girl desperately.

We must hope she did not know the force of adverbs.

When Bianca descended to the apartments thrown open for reception, instead of the compliments she anticipated from her brother and sister, she found them both considerably disturbed in

consequence of a message, that moment received from the Archbishop, to the effect that he was inconsolable at being obliged to deny himself the pleasure of attending at their fête that evening, in consequence of a slight but sudden indisposition, but that he should insist on his nephew, who had wished to remain with him, going in his place, and repeating his apologies and regrets.

On receiving this message, Beatrice, for once, saw only the annoyance of losing the Archbishop's company, while her husband saw therein a confirmation of the surmises of the morning.

"But what does he mean by that message about his nephew?" said Beatrice.

"He means," replied Visconti, "to blind us to the truth: had he been really ill, he knows it would not have been seemly for Ubaldino to come, and yet he fears that their both staying away might confirm the suspicions of the company in general."

"And then?"

"I see, but do not pretend to understand his policy of late."

"You mean, you have not your grandfather here to explain it."

"Keep your temper, Beatrice ; whatever it may be it is no fault of mine."

Bianca here interposed, by repeating what Adelaida had told her of Montefeltro's intended departure.

"I do not understand it," repeated Nino ; "the news cannot be evil, or he would stay to take advantage of them." .

"I am sorry we shall not have him here, after all, if this be true," said Beatrice, who, at her successful toilet, and in the absence of Genivra, had begun again to hope that the madness, as she called it, of the day before should have passed away. "For, surely," she thought to herself, "she will scarcely venture to come to a ball in a coat of mail, and on that her attraction depended, although it is hard to say what such a creature would dare."

She had scarcely, however, expressed her apprehension of Montefeltro's non-appearance, when the guests began to arrive, and amongst them Lancia and Montefeltro, with Genivra leaning on an arm of each, and followed by Buonconte and the ever-attendant astrologer. Bianca, who, in assisting her sister to receive and do honour to the company had forgotten the pecu-

liarity of her head-dress, was now suddenly recalled to a recollection of it, with what sentiments every young woman of her character will be able to imagine, by seeing its exact counterpart, except in the quality of the gems, worn by Genivra, and by her alone, of all present ; and as there was no longer a possibility of mistaking the object of Adelaida, and scarcely of doubting that she had been to Genivra's woman for the furtherance of that object, Bianca felt more disposed to sudden and real displeasure against her than she had felt in either of their lives before. The surprise and annoyance brought a yet deeper glow to her cheek, and her beauty was so striking that Montefeltro, irresistibly looking from her to the lovely creature on his arm, endeavoured to excuse his doing so by saying, laughingly—

“A Guelph and Ghibelline, each crowned ! What will our worthy Republicans say to this ? Will they banish one or both from weariness of hearing them called loveliest ?”

“Nay, you need be under no apprehensions,” whispered Bonatti. “These are not rival crowns ; do you not see that one is the crown of martyrdom ?”

Montefeltro darted an angry glance at the

utterer of evil omens, and wishing at the moment to escape from his neighbourhood, he drew Genivra away, while Buonconte, for the first time struck by the exquisite but not obtrusive loveliness and grace of Bianca, lingered to request the honour of her hand for the first dance. Genivra, whose new-born coquetry and desire of admiration were almost a frenzy, heard their words and marked their accents, and although already some steps in advance, she turned her head and cast such a glance of reproach at Buonconte as did not escape the observation of Montefeltro. But, whether it was as Beatrice had foreseen that the intoxication of the day before could not endure in a man of his age and habits, or that some hours' reflection had pointed out to him the impropriety of trifling with the niece of his old friend and the admired of his son, or that the news which had accelerated his departure had recalled his wandering thoughts and fancies to their proper sphere, certain it is that a father might have reproached her in the playful, though not unfeeling manner, he now did for that glance.

"Naughty girl! give me all your attention for the short time I am yet to be with you," he said.

“Not wishing to bid you a formal adieu, I did not tell you that I must be gone in half an hour—from you—from Pisa—from all I have so much enjoyed.”

Genivra as usual opened wide her eyes; and instantly became aware of the change in Montefeltro's manner, just at the moment that she considered herself aggrieved by Buonconte's attention to Bianca.

She turned them away quickly, and actually shed tears that were at least half of mortification. Montefeltro could not affect not to observe them, and drawing her into a little alcove that was at the moment unoccupied :

“Come, come, my beautiful child,” he said still more feelingly : “I should never forgive myself if I believed these drops were as sincere as they are precious ; nay, do not answer me, Genivra, my love ; I have recovered my senses, nor am I ashamed of the momentary aberration ; you are beautiful beyond everything I ever saw ; but to me you are as a child, the niece of my hereditary friend, and if I forgot my part of father, or grandfather for a moment, I shall fulfil it all the more faithfully hereafter, should it be my happy lot to have you for my daughter.”

What was Genivra's answer to this appeal to her good sense? He had taken her hand between his at the commencement of it, and as he would now have carried it to his lips, as was and still is the custom in Italy, she snatched it from him with the air and manner of a child who has been offered one toy instead of another when both are desired, drew the ring he had given her from her finger, threw it at his feet, and forgetful or heedless of appearances, she was flinging out of the alcove, to go she knew not whither, or to whom, when Nino, fortunately meeting her at the entrance, as he came in search of Montefeltro to request him to open the ball with Beatrice, took her hand saying,

"For once, this is my prize. As master of the house, I claim it for the first dance, even if I should create a rebellion by doing so," and without waiting for an answer he drew her with him, while he did his behest to Montefeltro, who had remained stupified, but smiling, at his own discomfiture.

He recovered himself at once on Nino's addressing him, and expressing his sense of the compliment, which he said he should not have ventured



to solicit against so many competitors, and without turning his eyes to Genivra, probably fearful of some fresh extravagance, he accompanied Visconti, and was the next moment dancing with Beatrice.

## CHAPTER II.

UBALDINO, who, it may be remembered, had not seen Bianca since the evening of the chase, and who had spent most of the intervening hours, as her sympathizing heart had divined, in remorse for the pain he had occasioned her, and humiliation for his own weakness, had attained to so much prudence and self-denial as to desire unfeignedly to avoid the farther temptation of the ball, where his imagination already pictured to him the full refulgence of Genivra's charms; and the indisposition which the Archbishop had assigned as the cause for retiring early to his chamber, seemed to him to favour this his wise resolve. It would seem, however, as if his doom were sealed, or else that something more is required of a rational being than flying from the ordinary events of life, in order not to yield to temptation; for, when he made known his intention to his uncle, who suspected nothing of his

motives, the answer he received was, that on this occasion it was absolutely necessary, not only that he should go to the ball, but that he should appear to enjoy the festivities in which he was to take part; and as this was given with that same unconscious air of decision, devoid of any explanation or appeal to his own good sense, which had contributed immeasurably to increase the young man's natural want of steady reflection and self-dependence; and as he did not dare to assign his reasons for what he had proposed, nothing remained for him but silent acquiescence, and accordingly he presented himself there, at a late hour, and with the very best determinations not again to be led astray.

On his first arrival circumstances seemed to favour him, for, when he paused inside the door of the saloon, where Bianca was already dancing with Buonconte, and heard on all sides the most rapturous though subdued exclamations of her beauty and lady-like deportment, which many contrasted favourably with that of the bright but untamed and now petulant Genivra, and when he perceived that of all the persons enjoying themselves at that moment, the eyes of one only were so anxiously watching for his arrival

that he had scarcely entered when those dove-like eyes were averted, in pleased but blushing consciousness, he felt his heart rebound with an emotion to which it had been for two entire days a stranger ; and he reproached himself with having left to Buonconte the happy chance of securing her for the first dance.

As soon as it was concluded he approached to request her to favour him for the second. She was already engaged ; and as Buonconte showed not the least disposition to relinquish the pleasure of her conversation, which, though fully able to appreciate, he had not until then had an opportunity of enjoying, Ubaldino once more received the spur which was ever necessary to keep his vacillating fancy steady. In the mean time Montefeltro, having finished the dance with Beatrice, and regained her good opinion by the grace and dignity with which he acquitted himself, both in it and in paying her the homage she expected, made his parting compliments, saying, that though he ought to have been already far on his way, he had found it impossible to resist the temptation of one more such hour as that just passed, which, to his future life, would be like a beautiful paint-

ing of a departed friend ; they were received with more sincere regret, however selfish it might be, than he had given himself the trouble to calculate upon, and seeing his son still engaged with Bianca, he made his way to her and whispered,—

“My hour is come, lovely lady ; my visit to Pisa has been one of those lightning flashes that come amidst the tempest, lending a destructive brilliancy which leaves the darkness more terrible than before. I would snatch something of the treasures it has shown me ere it be completely past, and if I may not hope to enjoy myself, poor exile that I am, at least secure them for my happier son.”

“I am sure,” replied Bianca, “that there is nothing which the Conte Montefeltro could ask which all here would not be happy to concede, either to the son for the sake of the father, or to the father for the sake of his son ;” and she bowed with quiet though smiling dignity to each.

The eyes of the father and son encountered each other for a moment, in admiration of what was, according to the taste of the times, an apt and well turned compliment ; and together, with-

out design, they both turned them from her to Genivra.

"I have asked much this evening," Montefeltro said, after a moment's pause, "for a father has no discretion for his son ; but nothing that I have more at heart than the countenance of the Lady Bianca."

"If, my lord, all your other requests have been as easily granted, I am sorry that you have not put our goodwill to a closer test ; but I trust there is yet time to improve it."

"Not an hour, not a moment!" he said, as his ear caught that which might have escaped one less practised and less attentive, the trumpets of his departing soldiers.

"You are right, it is, indeed, my father," said Buonconte, changing colour, and as Montefeltro hastily pressed the hand of Bianca to his lips, father and son left the room together, and were followed by several of their friends to the apartment where Montefeltro had requested permission to change his dancing costume.

When all was ready, and he heard his gallant war-horse neighing and pawing with impatience at the door, he wrung the hands of those around him with an air of cheerfulness which was in

curious contrast to his seeming fortunes at the moment ; and this was further commented upon when he, having mounted, his son holding his stirrup, and moved forward to let Bonatti mount also, the latter waved his hand, crying out with emphasis, "Farewell, my friends, *for a short time !*"

Although Ubaldino had gone with the rest to pay his parting compliments to Montefeltro, perhaps deeming it indiscreet to tarry for the last words between the father and son, he contrived to return to the dancing room in time to take Buonconte's place beside Bianca ; and, although he spoke but little, there was that peculiar softness and melancholy in his voice and manner, which is perhaps the sweetest homage that can be offered to the female heart.

"How beautiful you are to-night !" he said, at last. "But it was malicious of you to dress so like the Contessa Genivra."

Bianca's heart bounded with pleasure ; not so much at the implied compliment, as at Ubaldino's naming her thus openly, for she knew not that he did so as a sort of expiatory penance ; and as she looked towards the part of the room where Genivra sat, sullen rather than sad, at

Montefeltro's departure, and beheld her poutingly refusing some request which her grandfather was urging on her. Bianca could not help thinking that the image she saw in the magnificent mirror opposite to herself was, at that moment at least, more attractive.

Alas! poor Bianca! thou hast not as yet fulfilled the astrologer's prophecy of thy crown of martyrdom; and prophecies, made either by wise or interested men, seldom fail, because such make them not until they are at least more than probabilities.

Whether it was that Genivra had observed Bianca's eyes turned on her, and from her to the mirror, or whether it was she observed Buonconte on returning, look past her to where Bianca stood, or whether it was merely the general energy of her character that could not suffer long without an attempt at redress, a moment after a sudden change came over her whole manner and countenance, as, starting up and taking her uncle's arm, in the interval that took place between the dances, in consequence of Montefeltro's departure, she contrived to escape with him unperceived once more into the alcove, from whence he re-appeared a moment after alone,



and going up close to the musicians, he whispered with them for a little unobserved, except by those immediately beside them, and then, having succeeded in causing them to commence a measure different from that usually resorted to for dancing, Genivra, without any intimation to any one, even to the lady of the house, suddenly sprang into the centre of the room, which as may be supposed was immediately cleared for her, and with the sweetest tinkling bells that ever were heard fastened to her ankles that moment by her uncle, thus showing that, however precipitated, the design had been pre-conceived, and a sort of little instrument like cymbals in her hands, commenced all the graceful languishing movements, and from them passed into the wildest evolutions of a Moorish dance. Once more, we must have recourse to the trite, but true declaration, that it would be impossible to convey the remotest idea of the effect of this exhibition at a moment so unexpected upon the company. Had it broken in, all exquisitely beautiful and graceful as it was, upon the fulness of their own enjoyment, it is possible that on many at least, it would have produced the effects of satiety ; or had it been made when all were

more seriously disposed, it might have been severely criticised ; but exactly as it came, and when it came, just as the company were endeavouring, without much hope of success, to recover from an interruption and resume the prescribed form of gaiety, it came like a spell from a fairy region ; and before she had got half through the dance, she was again declared to be that region's queen : her own volatile spirits rose with her success, in proportion to their previous unnatural depression, and as she sprang, and bounded, and languished alternately, the musicians only being able occasionally to strike a sort of *ad libitum* accompaniment, the effect upon the beholders was like intoxication, and as Ubaldino turned wildly to look for sympathy, in his rapture he knew not and cared not whither, and, instead, met the now deadly pale face of Bianca with eyes full of inquiring terror fixed upon him, he fled from her side with the sudden, terrible conviction, that with her he never could know enjoyment ! At that moment a servant passing behind her with a plateau of refreshments, which it was afterwards found poor Adelaida, who till then had been a triumphant spectatress at the door, had dispatched to the

dancing room just then, in hopes of arresting the current which she saw was on the turn, caught Bianca's veil upon his arm, and plucking it with him as he moved forwards, the crown became loosened and fell to the ground. Bianca, who was too finely organized to be wholly free from the credulity of the age, felt it to be a fatal prognostic ; and whispering an apology to those nearest to her, she escaped from the room and appeared no more ; and her faithful Adelaida, with more delicacy than might have been expected, forbore all comments upon the termination of an evening from which she had hoped so much.

In the meantime the moral intoxication of the company, and that of Genivra herself, went on increasing as long as the physical powers of the latter endured ; and, when they were exhausted, such was the rush around her, and the emulation in offering her incense, that Beatrice, not only enraged with envy, but really feeling that the decorum of polite society could endure no more, calling to her husband, made her displeasure so manifest, that Lancia himself perceived it ; and, as the night was now far advanced, as soon as it was possible to get near his niece, he intimated the necessity for their departure.

The host's evident acquiescence in thisproposaleft the company no excuse for further delay, and they dispersed ; but, perhaps, it may not be hazarding too much to say, that never before or since did a private assemblage of comparatively polite and cultivated persons separate with so unanimous a feeling of admiration, nay, enthusiasm, for the physical attractions of an individual ; and, as they retired to their respective couches, to seek a late repose, each felt a vague impatience for the next morning's waking, as if it must renew somewhat of the past enjoyment. Alas ! and alas ! for that waking ; and how universal was the feeling then, though they wanted our dear little expressive Scotch word to express it, that the night before they had been "*fey*."

## CHAPTER III.

THE feverish visions of the first sleep had but just begun to subside into the calmer and more profound repose of the morning, when, at first, like a deadly dream—then as a confused recollection of the sound of Montefeltro's departing soldiers—but finally as something vaguely horrible, that would not be put off with false or imaginary explanations, the sounds came clearer and clearer upon their waking senses, until at last there was not one single heart in Pisa that did not vibrate to the fearful “dong—ting!” “dong—ting!”\* of every church, chiming together some death or deaths of deep and universal interest!

\* By these two syllables we have endeavoured to convey the idea of the answering strokes of a large and small bell, with an interval between, which is the mode of announcing important deaths at Pisa, but the effect of which must be felt to be understood.

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Every one sprang to his feet ; and, as the sounds continued even with unusual constancy and notes of lugubrious import, there was scarcely a window that was not thrown open with wild and nervous excitement, and maddening anxiety for some explanation ; but, as if to increase the horror of the moment, all asked, but no one was able to answer.

From window to window the people shouted and shrieked to each other, even for the consolation of their conjectures, but, in the common panic, none presented themselves to any one ; and, as the dawn had but just begun to break, there was not to be seen a creature passing in the streets of whom they might inquire.

Not more than a quarter of an hour, however, did this fearful bewilderment last, when, just as some of the male members of each family having hastily clothed themselves, many in the gay dresses they had thrown off beside their couches, a few hours before, were hurrying forth to ask an explanation at the churches, the distant, but distinct sounds of the little bells, carried through the streets by the brothers of the different religious societies, were heard, and presently they themselves were seen approaching, wrapped in

their long black robes and hoods of penitence, weeping tears of real bitterness and commiseration, as they chimed forth unceasingly, "Pray for your relatives, slain in the battle! Pray for your relatives, slain in the battle!" and as the awful words became more distinct to the inmates of each house as they passed it, it seemed to their terrified nerves as if they were addressed particularly to them; while, as again the words died gradually away in the increasing distance, they persuaded themselves that the cry had been transported through the channel of the high and narrow streets to the vaults of heaven itself. At this sight and sound, every man who had issued forth returned, and every head was withdrawn from the windows; and literally may we apply the words of Scripture here, that there was a voice of wail throughout Israel.

After the first moments given to the public shock, rather than to private grief, the thoughts of each family, of each individual, began to return homewards, and then, indeed, commenced the trial of the few fathers, husbands, sons and brothers, who had not gone to that fatal battle, in the double effort of concealing their own deadly apprehensions, and moderating those of

their women, for, to woman's weak, nervous, imaginative, and impatient temperament, the apprehension of dread, impending calamity, is generally less supportable, and more injurious, than the certainty which calls for the exercise of her piety and resignation.

Before long, however, the women themselves sent forth their men. "Go, go," they said, "since you will not let us die thus, go, and bring us, with your own lips, the permission to die." And again they went forth—and again they returned, without any further particulars. They had flown from church to church, and questioned, and, in some cases, in the maddening fear of returning home uninformed, had even threatened the priests, and other officials, in order to make them relate all they knew : but threats and entreaties were alike in vain, for the simple reason that the priests really knew little more than the people themselves. That little was, that the Archbishop having received fatal news of the battle, no one could tell from whence or from whom, had decided upon this method of announcing it as that most likely to call the minds of the bereaved at once from earth to heaven, and in the hope that the uncertainty of individual loss



would, by dividing the sorrow, deprive the former of half its pain when it should be known ; but in no single case did they fail to add that the battle having taken place at Meloria, exactly where the cardinals and other ecclesiastics had been made prisoners by the Pisans, some years before, the present disaster was evidently the vengeance taken by God for that act of sacrilege.

In receiving these answers, there was not a man acquainted with the upright and kind, but astute, character of the Archbishop, who did not return to his home with the conviction that the loss of lives must be enormous, and almost total, which could have led him to feel justified in spreading a panic so universal ; and, indeed, when they further reflected how few were the families who had not sent forth some cherished member, there seemed but little reason for any one to complain of being included in the uncertainty.

Perhaps nothing could better serve to prove the extraordinary seizure that had been made, if we may say so, upon the minds of the people, by all that we have described, than the single fact that a considerable time passed before the name of Ugolino was uttered by any lips, or the re-

collection of him had occurred to any mind, with one single exception,—that one was the Conte Lancia. He, like the rest, had wakened at the death-bells of the churches, and had heard the cry of the religious brothers, but while seized once more with a convulsive shivering that threatened his life, he kept his bald head, and thin, bare neck, stretched out of the window, with fearful anxiety to catch some sound that would tell him, at least, that his hated relative was amongst the slain.

“I cannot pray for them, till I know that,” he muttered, with a feeling that can only find some slight palliation in its having been excited, at that moment, much more by the public loss than by his own ; and when, at last, his servant rushed into the room, deadly pale, and trembling also, exclaiming, “The battle’s lost !” “And Count Ugolino ?” were his first words in rejoinder ; which being, however, unanswerable, “No matter, no matter,” he said, “send me Buonconte ;” and early as was the hour, he dispatched him instantly in pursuit of his father, to tell him to return and profit by the chance with his twelve hundred men, while he himself dispatched a messenger to the Archbishop, who

he well supposed was not sleeping, while all his children were in tears, requesting permission to wait upon him immediately.

As he only delayed to make a very hasty toilet, previous to following the bearer of this message, he arrived before the Archbishop, who it was said was engaged in devotion, had given his reply, so that the latter could not refuse, whatever might have been his wish, to receive the old man. He had not, however, yet taken his seat upon entering, when Lancia saw that he came in vain, if not unwelcome. Deep and irrepressible were the signs of grief upon the countenance of the Archbishop; and, if there were not those also of dismay, it was evidently only owing to those spiritual feelings to which he had the moment before had recourse. In accordance with his countenance his manner was composed indeed, but reserved and almost cold. He saluted Lancia in silence; and sitting down slowly, and wrapping his long clerical gown around his knees, he made it evident that he waited to be informed of the object of the visit. Lancia began already to feel embarrassed, and instead of the triumph with which he had intended announcing the departure of Buonconte,

he only uttered the words, "The news, Monsignore! the news!"

The Archbishop bowed his head in silent acquiescing attention: and that which would have been almost insulting from another, admitted of no stronger remonstrance towards him, even from the fiery old chief, than might be understood in the words, "Monsignore, in an event so deeply, so universally interesting, I thought it my duty to hasten to you."

"In doing so I am satisfied you had some distinct and good object," the Archbishop answered with suavity.

"I thought—I think I had, Monsignore,—to consult upon the measures to be taken in such an event."

"What is the event, my Lord Count?"

"The battle lost—and—"

The Archbishop waited for the completion of the sentence.

"Monsignore, is Ugolino killed?"

"Count Lancia, one thing is easily understood: either I know no more than has been made public, or I have reasons that seem to me sufficient for making no more known at present."

"But to *me*, Monsignore,—to the heads of your own party—"

"My Lord Count," the Archbishop said mildly, almost sadly, "how often must I, in order to obtain belief, repeat that I have no party. I am the father—the so-called—but oh! most unworthy father," and here he bent down his head and closed his eyes for a moment in unaffected humility, "of all who have gone forth to this battle, whatever may have been their principles or parties, as I am, or ought to be, of all that remain to mourn for them."

"But you are a Ghibeline," persisted Lancia; "we all know you are a Ghibeline, the nephew of Cardinal Ottaviano of blessed memory."

The Archbishop made a slight deprecatory movement with his hand; but Lancia, without perceiving it, went on—

"And now is the hour to prove yourself such."

"If I am known to be a Ghibeline, Count Lancia, as you assert, it requires no farther proof."

"But for the party, for the common interests, now is the moment; this discomfiture seems sent expressly; and if we fail to profit by it, we may never have such another."

At these words the Archbishop's countenance showed the first signs of emotion ; he fixed his eyes upon Count Lancia for a moment, and there was deep and angry inquiry in them ; but subduing, or at least endeavouring to conceal it, he contented himself with saying fervently,

"I trust we never may."

"Then surely, Monsignore, you will help us to profit by this. I confess to you I thought there was not a moment to be lost, and I have already dispatched Buonconte, to recall his father with his soldiers."

Again the Archbishop's eyes flashed with a sort of inward fire, and the red spot was again visible for a moment on his cheek ; but this time he kept his eyes bent down, and calmly asked,

"To what purpose ?"

"To what purpose ! Excuse me, Monsignore, for repeating your words ; but my astonishment is so great. Can you really ask to what purpose ?"

"I did, my lord."

"Why, Monsignore, in short—I really am becoming bewildered ; why, do you not perceive

that now would be the hour to put down the Guelphs, and triumph over Count Ugolino?"

"Are you then not aware my lord, that Count Ugolino is shortly to become my relative—one of my family?"

Lancia almost began to doubt his own senses, between astonishment and rage that he dared not manifest.

"But, Monsignore, if he were your brother or your father, we know—and none better than your lordship—that private affections ought to yield to public duties."

"The duties should be very clearly defined that require the sacrifice of brotherly love." But as the Archbishop uttered these words, there was the slightest shade of sarcasm upon his lips, and in his voice, so slight that it escaped Lancia's observation.

"Then this connection between your families is very dear to you, Monsignore?" he hazarded saying, rather in the hope of finding some vulnerable point in his, seemingly, impassible auditor, than with any ulterior design.

"I must hope you do not think so, my lord," was the reply; and this time, even Lancia's

obtuseness did not prevent him from observing something peculiar in the tone.

"They have told him of Genivra!—he is offended with me!" were his mental comments; and after a terrified pause, he found nothing more satisfactory to add than the words "Why, Monsignore?"

The Archbishop drew himself up with dignity.

"Count Lancia," he said, but as he proceeded his voice softened, "on an occasion of such universal and tremendous woe, wherein I fear the wrath of an offended God is but too visible, I must suppose you had other objects in coming hither at this early hour, than to talk of the private feelings and worldly projects of *our* families" (and he laid a slight emphasis on the possessive pronoun). "I would not be uncivil, but you must be aware of how my time and thoughts are occupied just now."

The proud and irritable old chief felt himself at last provoked at what he considered as an insult alike to his party and to himself; and unable any longer to command himself, with hands clenched so fast that the nails almost pierced the skin, and trembling lips, he said,—

"You are at least aware, my lord, that the



battle has been lost through the treachery of this Ugolino ?”

At the eleventh hour, the Archbishop seemed touched to the quick ; he started, and repeated, “ Treachery, Count ? ”

“ Treachery, Monsignore ; you are not then aware,” and he repeated the news of Sattarello.

When it was finished, the Archbishop asked,

“ Have you reason to rely upon your informant, Count ? I ask you as a man of honour.”

“ As a man of honour,” (and Lancia was such,) “ I answer that I have ; he is a man who has never deceived me, either through knavery or stupidity, and he was on the spot.”

The Archbishop seemed overwhelmed by this intelligence ; and Lancia perceiving his advantage, like all men of inferior judgment, hoped to improve it by precipitating the result.

“ You will, I trust, now no longer refuse to act with us ? ” he said.

“ As how, Count ? ”

“ In securing the interests of the republic against the Guelphs. Montefeltro’s men would be sufficient in the present state of affairs.”

The Archbishop’s eyes glared.

“ And because I have given the people over

to the betrayer, should I also give them to the slayer?" he asked in a hollow tone.

"But, Monsignore, consider, were it only to punish Ugolino, it is a public duty."

"Sir! we war not with the dead!" was the reply.

"Then he *is* dead, my lord?" and Lancia did not even try to conceal his exultation.

"Sir! if your account be true, he is either dead in fact, or dead in law!" and the soul of determined but restrained vengeance was in the words.

"Then you will arraign him, my lord!—you will have him convicted as a felon, and hanged—*hanged*," gurgled the fierce old man.

The Archbishop frowned.

"Count Lancia, such language is not for my ears, except in the confessional. I have already told you I war not with the dead, even I trust in spirit;" but the latter words were evidently rather a prayer than an assertion; and he added, more gently, "Have patience, Count, and believe that I will endeavour, at least, to do my duty."

"But what then is to be done? I have sent off Buonconte to recall his father."

"There is no harm done. He will not return."

Lancia on receiving this reply looked aghast, but finding that the Archbishop either did not, or would not notice his amazement, he exclaimed—

"Monsignore, you have sent away Montefeltro!"

"A late reparation is better than a persistence in evil, Count."

"I understand : you are no longer one of us," Lancia pursued.

"I would be the father, and if it were given me, the protector of all," replied the Archbishop, and with these words they parted.

Lancia was at once mystified, enraged, and terrified at what he considered the confession of defection upon the part of their most powerful ally—but as he no longer entertained a doubt of Ugolino's death, which he supposed the Archbishop wished to conceal until he should have selected his successor, he determined no longer to keep any terms with the Guelphs, and to consider as such all who should counsel moderation.

In the meantime the morning hours went by;

mid-day and evening came, and still the same horror of suspense and uncertainty hung over the city. Various attempts had been made to see the Archbishop; but after the visit of Lancia, he positively refused to receive any one, even his nephew; sending the one answer to all inquiries,—that his sympathy and prayers were with the people,—that he knew no particulars with certainty, and that the moment he did so, they should be made public. Many of the more able-bodied and the more anxious made their way to the Porto Pisano, but it was only to spread the alarm there, for nothing had been heard of the fleet since its departure the day before, for good or evil, which was accounted for by such a wind having blown almost continuously, but with still increasing fury from the south-east as made it a matter of impossibility for any vessel to have made its way back.

Many also of the near relatives of the missing hastened to that part of the Mediterranean already mentioned as forming the boundary of the grounds of San Lussorio, and still known as the "Gombo." But as if the elements were in league to preserve the horrid mystery, not a vestige of wreck or disaster was to be seen;

and despite the evident explanation which the storm gave of this, many a fond heart took a groundless comfort from the circumstance, literally, as we may say, refusing to give their hopes to the winds. At last evening approached, the storm fell as suddenly as it had arisen—the people who had wandered forth returned, not to their homes,—for houses—are not the places where the expansive feelings of the children of sunny climates seek their sympathies, all seek them where they are most accustomed to live and feel, to enjoy and suffer, and in sunny climates that is in the open air. In the streets then once again, that population met; and perhaps, there never were before so many assembled together whose feelings were for so many hours in such perfect unison as theirs had been during that long summer's day at Pisa. Had the particulars of the disaster been known it had not been so. Those who had lost husband, son, or lover, must in their own greater grief have sympathized but little with those who had only lost a more distant relative or friend; while the latter would have consoled himself, as I fear we all sometimes do, for his own sufferings in the still greater sufferings of his neighbour. But

as it was, it seemed a commonalty of woe, and each felt all, and gave all, in order to receive all, of sympathy and consolation.

Of this community of feeling, a touching instance occurred that evening. The people were, as has been said, almost entirely in the open air; those who had remained in the town inquiring of those who had returned from the fearful search along the shores, what vestiges had been traced, and the firmer-hearted, or the more hopeful, offering what consolation they could to the more nervous, when the attention of all was arrested by the sound of those evening bells which in every Catholic country still call upon the living, in the midst of whatever may be their occupation or enjoyment, to offer up a short prayer in behalf of those who are gone from amongst them, and whose doom is at least unknown upon earth. This call, habitually responded to in general, even when there is no particular association attached to it, in the present state of the people's nerves, still vibrating as it were to its appalling morning echo, produced an extraordinary effect. The cause was general, the grief was general, and the religious feelings in unison: when addressed then at that moment

by those bells, only one idea seized upon all—namely, that they had assumed the voices of the lately departed bidding adieu to their friends, and asking for those prayers in which the final adieus are always responded to. A flood of moonlight bursting at the same moment from behind the stormy clouds, was not inconsistent with the illusion, and the whole population, in houses, in streets, in suburbs, in alleys, wherever they happened to be, falling upon their knees by an almost simultaneous movement, and raising their eyes to that dark blue dome which from the high and narrow streets of southern towns seems to define Heaven's ethereal architecture more distinctly, such a chorus of the "de profundus"\* arose as none can doubt was accepted there, who believe that the sacrifice of God is a broken spirit.

When the Archbishop in his palace solitude understood the cause of this, he shed the first tears he had shed perhaps for many years, and cried aloud: "I thank thee, O Lord!" as he felt convinced that the means he had adopted for announcing the disaster had led to this. As

\* That Psalm which is sung for the dead by Roman Catholics.

if the souls of all had in that act given out their last effort, wearied and exhausted in mind and body, the people at last retired to their houses ; and, whatever might have been the individual exceptions, forgetfulness and repose seemed once more, temporarily at least, to fall upon the city.



## CHAPTER IV.

MAY it not be taken as an argument in favour of the immortality of the soul, that, whereas the body, after a due portion of repose, wakes refreshed as if the fatigue had never been, the soul, though also seemingly steeped in forgetfulness of its woes for a time, wakes to a sense of them, as strong, perhaps even stronger, than if that temporary forgetfulness had never been. Some adduce sleep as a proof of the *loss* of the soul's faculties,—to me it has ever seemed to show that their existence does not depend on our perception of them.

Refreshed in bodily powers, but, if possible, more individually grieved in spirit, with the first dawn of the following morning, the inhabitants of Pisa were again astir, and all hurrying towards the river, as if from it they had a right to claim some explanation of that which was as yet wrapped in seeming mystery. By the sight

which there met their eyes it would appear that, for some inscrutable object, that mystery, ere being unravelled, was destined to assume yet one deeper fold. On arriving at the Ponte del Mezzo, that bridge which was nearest to Count Ugolino's residence, and but a short distance from that whence the fleet had departed a few days before, they found anchored there three vessels of that fleet; not only calm, beautiful, and in as perfect order as when they had set out, but with the banner of the republic flying in triumph from the mast. The three vessels were all of the Visconti family, the connexions of Ugolino. The first who beheld this sight almost believed it a phantom of an over-excited imagination: the mind refused to take in, thus suddenly, a contrast so forcible to that which already had possession of it, but as the crowd increased, all doubt of the reality vanished; and then there was sent forth towards the boats a cry for explanation, of all the people had heard, all they had suffered, and all that they now saw, which caused the banner indeed to shiver in the air, but which elicited no other reply. The cry was repeated with yet greater vehemence, as if it had not already been sufficient to have waked the dead, but still with the same

success ; and a moment or two more served to convince the excited and credulous spectators, not only that there was not a living soul on board those silent vessels, which indeed was perfectly true, but that they had come unmanned, to tell that not a hand had survived the battle, and, with the banner flying, to say that they had died gloriously.

Amongst those, however, who having seen more of the workings and ingenuity of human nature, were less prompt to believe in the supernatural, was our friend Sattarello, one of whose maxims was, that as deeds which cannot bear the light are generally performed in the dark, so, those who would spy out such, must wake when they were supposed to be sleeping. Sattarello had long doubted of Ugolino ; not alone by echoing the sentiments of his patrons, but by his own natural sagacity ; and the news he had gathered at the Porto Pisano, together with the mystery which had ensued, made, perhaps, even more impression upon him than upon them. The moment the storm began to lull, he decided in his own mind that some news would arrive in the course of the succeeding night, as it had arrived the preceding, and accordingly, sincerely as his

kind heart participated in the general woe, in which, however, not being himself a Pisan, he had no individual interest, he contrived to take so much repose during that sorrowful day, as enabled him, when all was hushed in the streets, to rise, and placing himself in shelter, where he could spy the slightest movement on the river, without himself being seen, wait for the fulfilment of his expectations. He was not disappointed. About half an hour before the discovery of the manless galleys, by the first early risers, he was knocking (by long established privilege) at Lancia's bedroom door. The old chief started up at the well-known signal.

"What is it, Sattarello?" he anxiously exclaimed; "I should say you must have some important news, by knocking me up thus early; if anything could ever again be important to me since the death of the arch-traitor."

"Not at all, my lord; my news is so trifling that I fear you will kill me\* for disturbing you to tell it."

\* "*Mi amazzerà*," is a common mode with the lower class of Italians for expressing "he will be very angry;" nor is this by any means the only verbal similitude between them and the same class of Irish.

“Come, come, Sattarello, let us have none of your bantering now ; I see the devil lurking in your eye, even if I did not know you would not waken me at this hour for nothing.”

“Well, well, my lord, I will trust myself to your generosity ; my only news then is that, Count Ugolino, and fifty of the other captains, are, at this moment, snug in the Archbishop’s palace.”

On hearing these words, and knowing, as he did, that his informant, however tantalising in withholding or delaying important news, never in his life invented it, the old chief bounded from the ground as he had never thought he should have bounded again, and, with an impetus so unsuited to his powers, that he staggered and would have fallen, if Sattarello had not caught him in his arms.

“Oh, if this be the way you take it, I am safe,” said the latter ; “you don’t blame me then for coming ?”

Lancia had not yet recovered breath enough to speak.

“E—e—h ! what ! Count—Count devil, alive ? Sattarello, you would not dare to mock me ?”

“No,” said Sattarello, seeing the old man’s emotion rather increase than diminish—“no, I do

not mock you ; but go back into bed, or I will tell you no more !”

“Tell me, tell me all you know,” he gasped forth, “and, instead of going back to bed, help me to dress as fast as I can, that I may see what is to be done.”

“There is no better place for seeing what is to be done than bed,” persisted Sattarello ; “that seen, it is time enough to get up and act. At present the whole town is asleep, except ourselves and the company at the episcopal palace, and you would get yourself set down for mad by going about the streets alone at this hour. Go back to bed, and I will sit down and tell you all.”

Lancia, knowing the obstinacy of his spy, when he believed himself in the right, was fain to obey, in order to hear what remained, which, however, was no more than this, that, having determined to watch all night, where he thought it most likely news might arrive, he was, a short time before daybreak, repaid by seeing the arrival of three galleys, from which descended one, who, though muffled in a military cloak and hood, he knew to be Count Ugolino, and who was followed by officers, whom he counted to the number of fifty ;

and, after them, a considerable number of the inferior ranks, who went quietly and silently through the streets, towards their homes, and who, he doubted not, were well bribed to silence; for that though he attempted to enter into conversation with more than one of them, in order to learn what was going on, not one single word would any of them utter beyond the simple fact that they were going home. And so," added the narrator, "being able to do no more with them, I came off to you."

"This, then, is all?" asked Lancia.

"All!" retorted Sattarello; "and is that my thanks?"

"No, my good fellow; I mean, literally, is there any more?"

"It is not then enough?"

"And by far too much; but, in short, is there any more, Sattarello?"

"More! and what more then would you have?"\*

\* And this parrying of a direct answer is but a very faint imitation of that most provoking habit of the Italians, except that while to us they seem purposely mocking the questioner, they understand each other by the tone of their interrogatory answers, by their shrugs and by their never-failing "*che!*"

“I see, Sattarello ; but it is in vain ; here, like a bed-ridden hag, I will not stay ; I curse myself for my credulity of yesterday, which led me, believing that devil dead, to let precious time go by, hoping to see Buonconte return with his father, notwithstanding what the traitor Archbishop said ; but now I will not lose a moment in trying whether he will keep his word in any way. We shall see,” he continued breathlessly, as he hurried his clothes on with trembling hands, and with Sattarello only for his valet, “we shall see if he will prove good his words, or ‘*dead in fact, or dead in law* ;’ but where are the fools to trust to him ? not I, at least. Go, Sattarello, go and knock up the Gualandi, the Lanfranchi, Sismondi, and the few other true-hearted Ghibelines in Pisa, and, without breathing a word of your news to any living soul, beg of them to hasten hither ; we will then go amongst the Anziani, and see if we can outwit them yet,—here, take this purse in the meantime, as an earnest of something better.”

And as the old man had snatched it from a table, evidently without knowing or giving a thought to its contents, Sattarello, whose quick eyes had seen its goodly sides well lined, waited



to offer no more remonstrances about the early hour, but seizing it from the old man's hand, as if to relieve him from the weight, hurried into the street, and to the execution of his commission.

The Ghibeline chiefs were not slow to obey the call, nor were they much less astounded than Lancia himself, at the news that awaited them.

"Our star is declining," said Sismondi, sadly.

"You forget then your oath, my lord," retorted Lancia, his own despair rendering him intolerant of that of others; "the oath you swore at my table, that never should Ugolino reign an hour in Pisa, while any one of us now had an arm left to strike a blow."

"We may strike and not reach him," said Lanfranchi.

"God! and have I lived for this?" foamed Lancia. "So, thus then you fall off from me, one by one," and the old man seemed about to weep through impotent rage.

"Never!" said the Gualandi; "nor, were we also traitors to our cause and country, could you suppose us insensible to our private interests, which this man has betrayed, for who sent out more men and vessels than those here assembled

now, though, like yourself, too old to go forth in person to the battle—and which of them has returned to us? No! my friends and I only wait to hear what plan you would adopt; you see, Montefeltro does not return.”

“I do not despair of him yet—but even if he should not?”

“If he should not, we could not count one hundred men.”

“But seven may do our business,” retorted Lancia; and he explained that his object was to have Ugolino brought to trial for a second treachery against his country, the proof of which would be his having gone to meet the enemy after being warned of the augmentation of their forces, and against the advice of the admirals, and to have him convicted as a felon. To give force to his proposal, he reminded them of the words of the Archbishop. Many were the plans proposed and rejected; and various were the opinions formed and dismissed, or overruled, before this hasty council came to an agreement.

No one wished to defend Ugolino; but the more prudent doubted whether there were grounds sufficient to convict him of felony, whatever might be the moral certainty of it; and they wisely

observed that to fail in the attempt, would be to create a reaction in his favour—that instead of risking this, they ought at first, only to propose deposing him from the position, for which, either by treachery or inability, he had proved himself unfit; and leave it to the now probably exasperated feelings of the people to do the rest. The latter clause alone induced Lancia to listen to the more moderate course, and it was agreed that no time should be lost in going round the twelve Anziani to bespeak their voices in favour of the deposition.

As the morning was now tolerably advanced the Italians never, even yet, giving much time to what we call breakfast, the council broke up, each chief having the quarter of the city assigned to him for canvass where he was likely to have most influence. Lancia took for his part, the quarter then called Kinsica, where two of the four chosen from the people, carried on their trades; because it was hoped that they might be flattered at being solicited by the fiercest aristocrat of the day. On issuing forth into the street, Lancia glared round him, thirsting for sounds and signs of maledictions against Ugolino, in which he might have at least the

gratification of joining ; and so convinced was he that such must be the effect upon the minds of the bereaved on hearing of his safe return with so many of the officers, that as he saw groups gathered together conversing and gesticulating eagerly, he approached them to hear and offer them his sympathy and advice ; but what was his astonishment and horror to find that, instead of what he expected, there was but one voice throughout the people, and that one was in favour of Ugolino. His bravery, his prudence, his charity, his humanity, his care of the citizens' lives, preferring them to his own honour when that could no longer avail ; in short it would seem not only as if the popularity excited at the moment of his departure was still so fresh in their minds as to defy as yet all that might occur to destroy it, but that the people had forgotten their own sorrow in commiseration for his defeat.

Lancia could scarcely believe his senses ; and, in fact, he would probably have lost them altogether if he had not observed that, as yet, these groups were composed entirely of the lower and least instructed part of the population, with a considerable preponderance of women. There

was still then hope for him with the Anziani ; and to them he hastened with increasing anxiety ; his first visit was, instinctively, to the house of a weaver as the lowest, and therefore, as he hoped, the most easily flattered ; arriving at the house, he entered without other ceremony than a slight tap at the open door, and finding only the buxom wife, and judging from a certain air of conscious comeliness that she was not without influence over her husband, he decided that a few minutes could not be better disposed of than in securing it in his favour.

“You are happy, sposa,”\* he said, after the usual morning greetings, which were received with signs and exclamations of respectful surprise on the part of the woman,—“you are fortunate that your husband’s profession exempted him from going to this fatal battle.”

“Humph !” she replied, recommencing the little household occupations on which she had been occupied.

“He, at least, I am sure thinks himself so,” pursued Lancia, with a complimentary glance.

\* The usual mode of address to women of the lower classes in Italy, not without its latent gallantry, as implying the appearance of a bride.

"I don't know what he thinks; but I am not so selfish as to refuse him, or fifty like him, to aid such a man as our noble Capitano; and if more——"

"Eh! eh!" interrupted Lancia: "Who?—what Capitano?"

"What Capitano? Il Capitano del popolo, to be sure—our noble Count Ugolino; who, after risking his life for us, is returned broken-hearted because we did not give him men enough; but if he will go again, the very women, and I myself at the head of them, will go to help him."

"Enough, enough my good woman—I am in violent haste. Can I see your husband for a moment?"

"Not if you are in violent haste, my lord, for he has been sent for by Count Ugolino to the Archbishop's, and I do not know when he will return."

Count Lancia was so stunned by this answer, that he forgot his intended gallantry, and almost staggered out of the house. The woman looked after him. "I wonder if he is wrong in his head?" she said to herself; but dismissing the thought as not worth a decision, she resumed her occupations; while Lancia hurried, as fast

as his agitation would allow him, to the houses of the others; and it is unnecessary to dwell upon his alarm and indignation, when, in every one he received similar answers, only modified according to the different characters or humours of the speakers; and when he found, on returning bewildered and disconcerted to his house, that his colleagues had had no better success.

In the face of a state of things at once so adverse and so mysterious, even Lancia himself was compelled to pause, and finally, to agree with his colleagues, that until either Montefeltro or his son should return, or that some clew could be found for the labyrinth in which they found themselves, they should only exhaust their hopes and their strength, moral and physical, by knocking about in wild and unsystematized attempts: and that, therefore, it was more politic, however painful, once more to lie by and wait the issue, which at that moment they could not modify or hasten.

## CHAPTER V.

IN the meantime it is right that we should lend to the reader the clew which Lancia and his companions sought for in vain, by leading him back to the evening of Visconti's ball, when already vague rumours, probably arising partly from Sattarello's account of the disagreement between the commanders, partly from the anxiety of the people, and perhaps more than all, from no news whatever having arrived as soon as was expected, had begun to spread themselves, as we know, through the city. Ubaldino had mentioned them to his uncle, and the latter, although affecting to treat them with the utmost contempt, felt himself confirmed in the intention he had previously formed not to appear at Beatrice's ball, notwithstanding the unusual efforts she had made to induce him, while so much of the happiness and welfare of the republic was at stake. Assigning, then, a slight indisposition as his excuse,



he retired to his private apartments ; but there, as he sat in deep and anxious reflection, he was forced to admit to himself that which he denied to others, namely, that the loss of the battle was far from a result impossible to have occurred. The probable consequences of such an event at a moment when so many of the fiercer and least judicious amongst the Ghibelines were assembled in Pisa, probably expecting it, of course followed in his mind ; and then it was that he sent for Montefeltro, to entreat of him to accelerate his departure with his fourteen hundred men.

“ Were the people to be all sleeping as is their wont,” he said, “ when the news might arrive, I could have afforded to let you remain until morning, as had been decided on ; but, all awake and astir as they will be to a late hour under this unusual excitement, I should fear the consequences, and I am not in a state to support any additional anxiety at present. Go then : go as early in the night as it is possible for you to be ready. Continue you present moderate course, and believe that your yielding to my poor suggestions will not injure your cause with his holiness, nor yet with the Ghibelines of Pisa, for you know that the one fears, and the others love me ;” and

for Montefeltro's after favour with the pope, and success with or against the Pisans, according as it may be considered, as it does not enter within the limit of our selected period, we refer the reader to the histories of those times, and, though as less authentic, to Dante's great poem.

It was not for some hours after the preceding conversation that the Archbishop's head chaplain and secretary, who had that night chosen, perhaps in consequence of the indisposition of his patron, to sit up to receive Ubaldino on his return from the ball, to the no small surprise of the Archbishop knocked at his bedroom door, and scarcely waiting for permission, entered with a lamp in his hand, and in a state of such agitation and alarm, that the Archbishop, starting up in his bed, exclaimed :

"Ubaldino?"

"Ubaldino is well," the man replied ; for in those times the respect towards superiors in rank and station was, in Italy, left more to proof in matters of consequence, and to the imagination in trifles than it is now, as it is even now more in Italy than in England.

"Ubaldino is well ; but oh ! Monsignore, don't

be too much alarmed, but there is news of the battle."

"*Bad* news you mean," the Archbishop said, with apparent calmness : but he lay back again on his couch as he said so. "Speak," he then added ; "you know I don't allow of trifling."

"Oh, yes ! Monsignore, bad indeed. Ugolino's chaplain that was with him is below."

"Below !—where ?" exclaimed the Archbishop, again starting up.

"Here, Monsignore, in the palace ; the news is dreadful !"

The Archbishop remained silent for a moment.

"Hark'ee, chaplain," he said, at last : "has any one heard this news or seen the friar, except yourself ?"

"Not here, Monsignore ; and he says not any where, for that they did not know him personally at the gate, and they let him pass unquestioned on account of his cloth."

"So much the better if it be true ; *your* prudence and fidelity I know I can rely on : hearken to me then with attention, and see that I am obeyed. Not a syllable of the arrival of this friar nor of his news must transpire, until I give orders to that effect : not even to my nephew.

Do you understand me? It is well: leave me now for a few minutes—remain in the ante-room—and when I give the usual signal, instead of coming to me alone, conduct this friar to my presence. I see you wish to say more—but—nay then—as well from you as from him—say the word, but say it shortly,” and again he leaned back upon his couch; and the faithful attendant, seeing that he was deadly pale and that the coverlet was agitated, made two ineffectual attempts to speak, and then bursting into tears, exclaimed,

“I cannot, I cannot, my dear master. You are right. I will leave you to pray a little before you hear it,” and he withdrew.

In about a quarter of an hour he heard the well-known signal, and in a few minutes more the friar was in the presence of the Archbishop; who, having risen and wrapped himself in a nightgown, received him in a closet adjoining his sleeping apartment. No one, however well acquainted with the Archbishop, could have now imagined from his manner or appearance that he was there prepared to hear what to him was the most dreadful news he could have received, unconnected with his beloved nephew,

especially after having heard of a slight indisposition to account for a somewhat unusual shade of paleness. The friar was Fra Bonifazio.

"You are the bearer of evil tidings, I understand?" the Archbishop said, slightly returning his silent reverence. "Before you commence, be warned on one point. I can endure anything except trifling or suspense: in one word, then, what is the extent of the disaster?"

"Monsignore, I cannot tell, but your eminence cannot think too much."

"Is *all* lost, sir?"

"*All*, Monsignore."

"And Count Ugolino?" the Archbishop uttered rapidly, determinately, and we might say desperately, as if while he yet had the power to speak, though his voice was neither so steady nor articulate as he had intended.

"Gone also, Monsignore. At least I saw the 'Capitana' dashed to pieces before my eyes."

"And yourself, sir? I have desired you not to trifle. I understood you were—you were Count Ugolino's chaplain."

"It is true, Monsignore, and I was saved by a miracle. The pilot, who is my brother-in-law, and who was still on board on account of the

rocks, which to add to all the rest, were there like crocodiles watching for us, put me off alone in a little boat when all was going to destruction, and I got landing at the Gombo before heaven and earth blew together in the storm. I would have come sooner, Monsignore, but that I felt so sick when the terror of death left me, that I was nearer dying than before, and was not able to move until two or three hours ago."

"Were you on board the 'Capitana'?"

The friar hesitated for a moment ere he answered.

"No, Monsignore. I was detained on shore by the Lady Bianca Visconti to medicate a monkey — I mean a dwarf torn by a monkey, and I was too late to get up with the 'Capitana.'"

"Are you the person, as your dress leads me to suppose, for whom my permission was asked to go as a supernumerary chaplain with the Count."

"I am that unworthy being, Monsignore."

"And yet he dispensed with your attendance in his vessel! There is something in this I do not understand. Take care sir, take care, friar; do not make *me* suffer unnecessarily," and the

flash of an ill-suppressed volcano shot out for a moment from the Archbishop's eye.

The friar saw it and shivered beneath his frock.

"I will tell you all, Monsignore," he said, assuming an air of frankness. "My nerves are not my strongest part, and thinking the Capitaine would be the foremost in the fight, and meeting with a friend in the first vessel that I came up with, who said he would fight better and die happier if he had me to attend him in his last moments, I did not think—I did not feel it in my conscience to leave him."

"And this friend?"

"Alas, Monsignore!" and he heaved a sigh that might fill a sail; "as you do not love suspense, it is best to tell your eminence at once,—that—that I am the only one left to tell the tale."

In despite of all the Archbishop's dislike, in common with all of strong feelings, to betray them to the gaze of others, probably to avoid the mockery of consolation for what cannot even be conceived, he started visibly at these words; and it was only the seeming impossibility of any one venturing to tamper with him, or of

any motive for so doing which induced him to give credence to it, even allowing for exaggeration. It was some time before he could trust himself again to speak; and when he did, although he was able to discover, or, more properly speaking, was permitted to observe that the friar's position and fears, together with his quick departure from the scene of havoc might account for much exaggeration, he was not able to elicit one word that would have justified him in disbelieving the dismal story. On the contrary, when the friar, half cunningly, half naïvely described his feelings at finding that the shelter he had sought in the cabin of the galley from the scenes on deck, only served to render him a witness of all the horror and suffering of a naval battle without its excitement, as one mangled mutilated being after another was carried down, crying out for his ministry, there was a truth, a confession in every word, that left no longer any doubt upon the Archbishop's mind; for how could he guess, that though so much had really come to pass, it and all else that the friar related had been, if not predetermined on, at least foreseen by Count Ugolino, and by him dictated to his trusty



minion as that which was, in any case, to be conveyed by him to the Archbishop immediately the battle was well begun ?

As soon as the recital was finished, the Archbishop informed the friar of a decision to which he had come during the quarter of an hour in which, after his servant's communication, he had remained in silence and alone, and which was only strengthened by what he had heard, and what, in the hearing, he had been able to judge of the friar's character. It was absolutely to prevent his having any communication whatever with the people, until some further news should arrive.

"The will of Heaven," he said, "has been made manifest in the manner and the hour in which I have received this awful intelligence ; be it mine to see that it is seconded."

Accordingly he informed the friar that he must consent to become a prisoner, absolutely and completely, in the closet which they then occupied, and to which no one was at any time permitted access except his head chaplain, until something further should transpire.

"It cannot be long delayed," he said ; and, in the meantime, without further delay, he

dispatched messengers to every ecclesiastic of authority in the town, with news that the battle had been a fatal one, and with directions that this should be at dawn of day made known to the people exactly in the manner which has been described. The facts were, however, very different from those described by the friar. •

## CHAPTER VI.

It had been decided from the first that the battle should, if possible, take place at Melaira, as well for the reasons already assigned as because the jutting rocks of the island so called, were calculated to serve as a good cover to those who should first avail themselves of that position. Why, foreseeing this, the Pisan generalissimo delayed the fleet, part of a day and the whole night at Porto Pisano, is one of those historical facts that seem, at least, to admit but of one solution.

Before leaving Pisa, the plan of attack agreed upon had been that, supposing the enemy to gain the shelter of the rocks which lay on their left, the Pisans were to endeavour to force that left wing while their courage and ardour were yet fresh; and, that gained, conquer the rest with ease and triumph. Upon hearing, at the Porto Pisano, however, of the augmentation of

the enemy's vessels, as that intelligence was not, of course, without its effects upon the soldiers, the first plan was changed ; and it was decided to exhilarate their spirits by letting them attack first the part where the defence was weakest.

For this purpose the following arrangements were made. There were already twenty-five galleys under the immediate command of, as indeed principally furnished by, the Admiral Morosini. To these were now added other fifteen, detached from what was to have composed the centre, amongst which was one commanded by Count Sotto, the son of Count Ugolino, and entirely fitted out by him. These thirty vessels it was now decided, were to make the first attack, no longer upon the left, but upon the right wing of the enemy, as being the more exposed ; while the admiral, Saracini, with twenty of the heavier vessels, should hang about the left, rather in an attitude of defence than of offence. The centre thus reduced to forty, chiefly manned from the islands of Corsica and Sardinia, men of proved spirit and bravery, and fierce enemies to the Genoese, was divided into two files, one behind the other, in order that in case of

disaster, the second might serve to cover the retreat of the first.

Of these the command was given to Arrigone Gaddadubbi, an experienced seaman, whose courage was beyond question. And now comes the mystery, which seems either to deepen or to clear up all the other mysteries. Count Ugolino, whose whole life, it might be said, was one proof of courage and blaze of martial glory,—he whom we have seen with his left arm embracing the mast, from which floated the banner of the republic, while with his right, he waved, as it were with his adieu, his vows to the people that there should be his post of victory or death, *he*, now, without a reason assigned, except some hollow compliments to the Admiral Morosini of the people's confidence in him, suddenly declared his intention of abandoning that standard, and the vessel which bore it; and, causing Morosini to take his place in the Capitana, he selected from the twenty vessels of the centre, three galleys belonging to the Visconti, and entering one of them, and ordering the two others to follow him, he withdrew with them out of danger from the conflict; desiring Arrigone to keep on the watch for his orders, while he caused four little

skiffs to place themselves around his galley to be in readiness for the more correct conveyance of them. What amazement, what remonstrances, or what conjectures were occasioned by this proceeding, history has not sent down to us ; and we must therefore leave them to the imagination of the reader, according to the opinion he may have formed as to the evidence or non-evidence of Count Ugolino's guilt. In the mean time the vessels moved on to meet the enemy ; but by the force of oars only, as the little wind there was, coming from the west, was directly in the teeth of the Pisans.

Ugolino had explained his hope to be, that Morisini, with his forty vessels, commencing the attack with vigour, where the enemy was least protected, should not only take, sink, and destroy many of them, but should create such confusion as might discourage them, while it should produce a contrary effect upon the victors. Nothing could be better or more plausible than Count Ugolino's theories, as naval victories in later days have proved ; all that was wanting to success was that they should have been founded on established basis ; such, however, was not the case. No sooner had the enemies' vessels become discern-

ible in the distance, than the look-out from the mast-head announced that instead of the line-of-battle which he calculated they were to present they were rapidly approaching under a favourable wind, in the form of a triangle, with one angle only presented to the Pisans, while their numbers, notwithstanding the intelligence received, did not, as yet at least, exceed that which had originally been supposed, namely, one hundred.

Such a line-of-battle, which had not even been taken into contemplation, once more disordered all their plans, and the result of the short deliberation which the time admitted of, was, that the Admiral Saracini, having but twenty vessels, should take twenty more from the centre, and that thus he and Morosini, equal in number, should attack the two sides of the triangle together, while Arrigone, with the seventeen vessels remaining to him, divided into three close lines instead of two, should present themselves so as to prevent the point of the triangle from advancing. That point was the Genoese Capitana, an immense and powerful vessel, fitted out and commanded by Oberto Doria, ancestor of that Doria, whose fame as admiral and citizen, three centuries

after, filled the world, and is still spoken of with admiration ; his two wings were headed each by names also celebrated in their day, and not wholly unknown to us—Conrad Spinola on one side, and San Matteo on the other—and were filled up by all the best and bravest that Genoa could produce. These now lay to, with lowered sails and suspended oars, to wait for the expected assault, while Doria and Spinola showed themselves on their decks, glittering in armour, as if to incite to and hasten it. It would seem now as if all this should have clearly shown to Count Ugolino that their intent was to take him in his own snare, calculating that when he should have exhausted the strength and ardour of his men upon an almost impregnable barricade, they must fall an easy prey to the vengeance of those who came fresh and cool to take it. Such, however, was not the view he took of the matter ; on the contrary, driven, as it were, by some irresistible impulse against all conviction, he ordered the trumpets to sound the signal for attack, himself remaining still, as has been said, beyond the reach of danger. The challenge was not refused. It was answered by a shout of triumph from the Genoese, which seemed to say that at last was



sounded the death note of their long detested and formidable rivals. Doria, on the one side, and the Pisan commanders on the other, said a few words to exhort their men to steadiness and courage, and both spoke nearly to the same effect, namely, that as the fate of one or other of the two illustrious republics depended upon the issue of that battle, every man should feel that he was called either to victory or death. Nor is there reason to suppose that these words fell idly on the ears of any ; for there ensued such a combat as, for fierceness and obstinacy united, had not been seen for many ages, and, perhaps, in those qualities, has not been since surpassed.

Morosini, unappalled by the immense size and weight of the Genoese Capitana, came gallantly up to her with the full force of his oars, and made his attack no less gallantly, which the other received with all the dignity of a superior, not giving sign of having even felt it. While the vessels were moving towards each other, previous to the commencement of the battle, a wonderful silence was preserved, as if each was hoarding up his energies for what was about to take place ; but, the ice once broken, the conflict began, the

music of every band, every horn and every trumpet was lost in the clamour of shouts, threats, and imprecations, from every side. After the attack of the Capitana, the conflict became general. The galleys of the Sismondi, the Gualandi, the Alberti, and others under Morosini, attacked those of the Genoese who came from the western side, as Susilia, Porta, Portanova, and Borgo di Pre ; while Saracini, who commanded the heavier vessels of the Gaetana, Upezzinghi, the Lanfranchi, the Orlandi, &c., attacked the galleys commanded by Spinola, which were chiefly from the east, as Castello, Piazza Lunga, Macagnana, and San Lorenzo.

Morosini himself, in the meantime, continued the attack bravely, though uselessly, against Doria. Every instrument of destruction, known to the times, had been provided in great abundance, on both sides, and was now resorted to ; not only showers of javelins, of arrows of different sorts, balls, and stones thrown from slings, darkened the air between the contending vessels, but scalding oil, soap, and pitch, were cast even while the distance was yet too great to admit of their taking much effect. Every moment, however, was lessening that impediment, until, at

last, such was the proximity, that not less than thirty thousand men were engaged, not only galley against galley, standard against standard, but it might almost be said, hand to hand, while now the scalding materials pouring from those placed in the rigging for the purpose, making their way even through the morions and helmets, produced a delirium of anguish and blindness, far more dreadful than the friendly ball which ends suffering and life together.

At last the foaming waves themselves began, as it were, to blush for the men who, under the sacred symbol of peace and good-will, were butchering each other with far more deadly fury and determination than the wild beast who seldom destroys his kind.

For a considerable time the combat appeared equal. The great Genoese Capitana had not yielded an inch, but her men fell around as did those of her adversary ; but, suddenly, as if a burst of impatience had simultaneously seized upon the combatants, they became yet more furious from desperation ; and then if one had waked from a trance, on board any one of those vessels, he must have believed himself in hell. The air was almost as dark as night, from the

clouds of smoke and flying missiles, while the yells and imprecations, mingled with the shrieks and groans of the wounded and the dying, whose state did not exempt them from their share of the scalding pitch, oil, and turpentine, afforded nothing to correct the illusion. This continued as long as either party had missiles or swords, and when the former were expended, the only pauses that ensued were while each stooped to gather up those of his adversary, in order to hurl them back with the spirit as well as the letter of restitution !

In the mean time the slaughter was fearful ; but no one, except the sufferers, took time to heed it. As one fell, a companion leaped upon his body to do his duty ; soldiers seized the helms ; inferior officers took the command when the commander fell ; in short, it seemed as if literally, one soul only was diffused through so many bodies, and that it contracted itself with still concentrating energy according as its outward bulwarks were destroyed. At last the Genoese commander gave the command for the divers to go and pierce the sides and bottoms of the enemy's vessels : and no sooner was this perceived by Ugolino, than he gave a similar

order to his divers, although the triangular order of the Genoese, which was still unbroken, rendered the task much more difficult, and nearly impossible for them to accomplish.

And now the scene changed a little, but only to present fresh horrors. The pluggers were of course set to work without delay, to stop the holes made by the divers ; but, as in every other case, it was much easier to commit than to repair the injury ; and accordingly, now were to be seen not only men falling, but the beautiful galleys themselves here and there, bursting up with a crash, or gradually sinking before the eyes of their companions, without other notice taken of them than that those on either side came closer to fill up the chasm they had left, grasping, as they did so, at every stray oar or missile of any kind which could, by human ingenuity, be converted into an implement of death to their fellow men. Nor did the desperate combatants confine themselves to such as came in their way by chance ; a Genoese fell dead on his deck transfixed by an arrow in his throat ; a Pisan sprang from his own galley amidst a thousand hideous deaths, and seizing upon his armour attempted to spring back with the tro-

phy, but coming short, fell between the vessels and was lost.\*

The extreme of Saracini's file had been for some time engaged with a Genoese vessel of greater magnitude and force, and stood her ground bravely ; but, all at once it was perceived that she had struck upon a submarine rock ; which, making a hole that let in water much faster than pumpers could remove it, she began to fill and sink before the eyes of all. The sight of this fearful odds in his favour touched the heart even of the fierce enemy, and he commanded a white flag to be hoisted ; and, the deadly din ceasing for a moment, he called upon the Pisans to surrender, not to him, but to the decree so clearly announced to them. The answer was a renewal of the combat ; and, like the devoted three hundred of Leonidas, they showed that hope of victory was far from being the most powerful incentive to determined courage. They fought while an arm could be raised above the watery grave that had already half enclosed them, and when it had risen to their very lips, they shouted "Viva la Pisana Repubblica !"

\* Historical.

But why prolong the fearful description ! It would seem as if the Genoese had come to the battle determined, if possible, to acquire the glory of having beat the Pisans at equal numbers, but provided, in case that should fail them, to do so even at odds. Till now the numbers had been equal, and equal was the result ; but as the Pisans instead of losing courage, seemed to grow more desperate through impatience, the Genoese began to think, that if matters continued thus much longer, they might either lose the glory they had anticipated altogether, or, at best, purchase it at too dear a price ; and then was explained the seeming contradiction of what the Pisans had heard at Porto Pisano of their numbers, and what they had found ; when, on a signal from Doria, the admiral Giaccheria, who had till then lain behind the shelter of the rocks, started forward with his galleys of reserve, and then indeed the victory was no longer doubtful, and all that the Pisans could hope for or seemed to aim at was that it should cost as dearly as possible to their enemies. With such a determination the battle lasted still some time longer in all its horrors. On the fresh vessels coming up, Doria ordered the triangle to

open and form into line. Ugolino did the same with his; but not only were there now fearful odds against the Pisans in number, but the fresh and unused physical power of the new arrivals could not fail of its effect, whatever might be the moral energy of the wearied. Morosini indeed acted as a hero: he affected to have foreseen the augmented force, and called upon his men not to lose heart, and they did not; but they lost lives in fearful rapidity: only once a sort of momentary panic seemed to fall upon them, when, in the dash of the enemy's vessel against theirs, a rush of water rose above their heads, and falling, seemed from its colour to be a shower of blood.

From this, however, they quickly recovered, and again fought so tenaciously, that when the enemy had fixed his grappling-irons, and the vessels seemed but one, as a Genoese endeavoured to drag a Pisan from his deck to theirs by force of the instruments used for that purpose, his companions, with cruel determination, threw theirs also round him to retain him, and thus, both sides alike regardless of his cries for the mercy of death, he was torn asunder, between friends and foes!\* and still Morosini fought,

\* Historical.



and still exhorted his men ; and even when the Genoese, wearied of his determination and bravery, sent two other vessels to assist in conquering him, he refused to yield. At last Arrigone, who, witnessing the unequal conflict, had looked in vain for a signal from Ugolino, to go to the rescue, unable longer to endure the sight, bore gallantly up, and struck the Genoese vessel with such force upon the opposite side, as might, at least, have delayed the final result, had he not himself, at the moment, received a ball in the forehead, thrown from the mast of the enemy's vessel with such force, that he fell back upon his own deck to rise no more. Almost simultaneously, the friend to whose support he had come, received a blow which laid him senseless, and so were two of Pisa's best patriots and commanders, spared the dreadful doom of seeing what immediately ensued, namely, the great tree which had, for so many ages, resisted the fury of the elements on the heights of the Apennines, yield, for the second time, to the destroying hatchets, which were applied, not now, like the first, to transplant it to another scene of triumph and of glory, but in order to tear from its height the Pisan standard, dearer to her sons than life itself, and trample it

in their blood on the deck. Further resistance was not only useless, but impossible ; the vessels were in the hands of the victors.

Morosini, still insensible, was taken prisoner, nor had Saracini a better fate : bravely had he too fought against Spinola, but as vainly—he and his vessel became the victor's prey ; and then, the best and bravest chiefs of the Pisan republic, slain or prisoners, Ugolino gave the signal for retreat. That it was his duty to give it then, no one can deny ; it is the preceding circumstances only that admit of question. The signal was instantly obeyed ; and while, by this means, fifty of the one hundred galleys that had left Pisa in the morning, were saved from capture, it must ever remain a mystery to us, that of the commanders or the men who reconducted them to port, not one was ever heard to utter a syllable against Ugolino ; nay, that the prisoners themselves, when communication was afterwards opened between them and their friends, sent messages to the effect, that he deserved all their confidence !

It might, perhaps, be permitted to doubt the authenticity of the latter, and bribes may have purchased the former, but still we feel that we

never can come to a completely satisfactory explanation.

If the beams of sunshine which played around the Pisan standard, in the morning, were treacherous, they seemed to be now repentant for the error, for, almost at the same moment in which it bowed its head, we might say, for ever, the last of those beams hid itself behind the western mountains, and the wind suddenly shifting right about, there rose, in its stead, such a tempest, as had not been known within the bosom of the Mediterranean in the memory of man, as if to do fitting obsequies to the fiercest and bloodiest battle that it had witnessed since the days of Roman greatness.

Ugolino and his three galleys made for Corsica, whither they were followed by the others which had escaped from the battle, and lay within the shelter of its shores that night and part of the following morning, and made their way to Porto Pisana, towards evening ; Ugolino arriving first, with the determination to be himself the harbinger of the news so eagerly expected, in order to give his own version of the disaster.

## CHAPTER VII.

AND here we must suppose that, let that disaster have proceeded from heaven or from hell, if Ugolino had a heart of flesh it must have winced at the sight and sounds, of the tears, sobs, lamentations, and despair, which met him on every side as he landed ; and, if policy mingled with all to which he had then recourse to comfort the afflicted, let us hope that feelings of humanity, if not of remorse, had also their share. His first order, almost his first words, as he stepped on shore, were again to close the gates of the town, and to let no one pass in or out without an especial order from himself ; for Count Ugolino was one who loved to act alone, and without disturbance. That done, he turned to the shrieking women and anxious men who surrounded him, and, assuming the air and aspect of a retreating but unvanquished warrior, he told them that it was true the victory was with the

enemy, but that, short of that, all was theirs—that those who had died had died bravely, but that many were on their way to speak comfort to the bereaved, and he pointed to the returning vessels in the far distance ; and that, in the mean time, the duty of Christians and of women was, instead of indulging in useless tears for the gloriously departed, to occupy themselves in providing for the wants of the wounded survivors ; and following up this suggestion he obliged every one to lend their aid ; and, in the energy of his desire to serve others, or himself, he would not even admit of the delay necessary for the following vessels to arrive, but sent out boats to meet them, supplied with all that could be necessary or useful for the wounded they contained. In addition to all this he seized upon the treasury of the Custom-house, signing upon the spot his own responsibility for the sum, and, according as the other vessels, forty-seven in number, arrived in port, he himself visited every one of them in person, and he caused a *lira* to be given to every man who had suffered even the slightest injury.

All these attentions paid, with every other which he could think of to comfort and content

the people, he announced his intention of proceeding to Pisa without further delay.

At Pisa, however, he did not dare to attempt a similar *coup-de-main*. There the numbers were greater, and his adversaries more powerful ; and, accordingly, he was compelled to bow his haughty head, and endeavour to avert the anticipated storm by an entrance which most men honourably vanquished, and conscious of having done their duty, would have scorned. Taking on board of his own three galleys, then, the fifty commanders who had been saved, and leaving the other vessels with such of the men as were too ill to be removed further, he left Porto Pisano in time to arrive in Pisa before the dawn of the following morning, and purchasing the silence of every man on board for a few hours, he sent each to his home amply supplied with money and other necessities, judging, with his usual acuteness, that the comparatively few, returning thus unexpectedly when all were supposed lost, would be each received as an especial boon from him ; and that, as all things in this world are relative, the minds of the multitude having believed all lost would now count only and dwell upon the saved.

Leaving the vessels moored almost under his own palace windows, and accompanied by the fifty other commanders, in silence and in darkness, he made his way to the Archbishop's palace. The Archbishop in the mean time had passed another night of mental agony and mortal anxiety as to what was to be the event of a disaster which seemed likely to overturn the system of ages in the country of his adoption, and which threw for the moment the whole responsibility of stemming the torrent from wherever it might flow, upon him ;—the youthful Morosini, the deputy of his father, and the inexperienced Visconti, the self-supposed confidant of his wily grandfather, both passing in the estimation of the Archbishop for nothing more than puppets to amuse the eyes of the people, so long as they knew that the strings which moved them were pulled by able hands behind the screen. Towards morning, however, his physical exhaustion overcame his moral excitement, and he fell into a profound, and what would have proved a refreshing slumber, if it had not, almost at its commencement, been interrupted by that intelligence which, perhaps, of all that could have arrived was that which he least expected, namely, that

Count Ugolino, with fifty of the commanders of the late army, was at that moment in his palace. The moment he was able to realize the idea it was succeeded by the conviction that he had been practised upon, although for what reason remained yet impenetrable, for he knew full well that the mere cowardice of a friar, however it might have caused him to exaggerate horrors in his own mind, or to others would never have led him after many hours' interval, in the middle of the night to the Archbishop's palace to relate these exaggerations. Ruggieri, however, was not a man to yield to his imaginations while there seemed a road or hope of arriving at the reality ; his whole moral system consisted of one constantly-enduring effort to keep up the equilibrium between fiery passions and cool practical reasoning. He made as hasty a toilet as he considered decent, and then ordered the Count to be shown alone into a chamber, adjoining on the other side, the closet in which the friar was still a close prisoner. Instead of going round by the door by which the Count was to enter, the Archbishop chose to pass through that closet ; where the friar, having heard some stir, was already up, and apparently engaged in his devotions. The Archbishop



passed rapidly through, merely saying as he did so, "Count Ugolino is arrived," as if it had been a matter hourly expected by both. He closed the door behind him, and the friar, although he had been too devout to rise from his knees even as Monsignore passed, now very uncere- moniously suffered them to relax beneath him into a sitting posture ; and, with his hands still clasped,

"Now then for it!" he exclaimed. "Neck or nought! The priest or the soldier! They have long been dragging the Republic right and left between them without knowing yet who will win, and now poor I am the prey. Let us see how Ugolino will treat me ;—but if any one could tell me what drew me into his clutches at all, out of my quiet convent! A message from that scheming prior was the beginning. What is to be the end is another question ; but no matter ; what is to be, is to be. I believe I had always more of the soldier than of the friar in me, except in the one point of courage. But my poor mother—no matter—he who is born to be—— and may be, now I think on't, that's the reason I got safe to shore this time. O Lord! O Lord! if that should be really it, and if Ugolino were

to sell me after all ! But here he comes : long life to these old doors that have felt many a summer's scorching sun ! " and rising, he placed himself in a position where the chinks in the door, like too many in Italy at the present day, enabled him to hear, and occasionally even to see, all that passed.

The meeting between the Archbishop and the Count Ugolino on that occasion exhibited, perhaps, one of the most consummate pieces of diplomacy, as far as its importance extended, with which history has furnished us. The Count advanced to the Archbishop with the air and manner of one who would say, "I am here, my lord, because I am conscious of being able to remove the suspicions which I know you must entertain of me." While the other, determined to conceal and suppress, as far as his utmost efforts might avail, every sign of what he felt—even his astonishment at seeing the Count before him—as what he supposed the most likely means to come at the truth, bowed his head, as if understanding and acknowledging the silent appeal. He then waved his guest to a seat, and took his own, but with a countenance so pale, that Ugolino, as if forgetting everything else in his interest

for him, said in a low, expressive voice, and with that smile to which we have already said he had the power of lending the expression that suited him,

“Monsignore, forgive me—but—are you not well?”

“As well Count as a shepherd can be, who has heard of the loss of his entire flock,” replied the Archbishop, calmly.

“Now for it!” whispered the friar to himself.

“But if I am come, father,” pursued Ugolino, “to bid you be comforted, by telling you that the accounts were exaggerated, and that though the battle is lost, there are hands and hearts left to desire to repair it, and to find the means to do so.”

With all the Archbishop’s predetermination not to be surprised even at any amount of deceit that had been practised on himself, he could not resist an exclamation and gesture of surprise and incredulity at this astounding assertion; and he rose hastily from his chair as if to proceed to the closet and produce his contrary evidence, which the friar perceiving, fled from the door, and in his alarm ensconced himself once more in bed, merely as being the spot farthest removed. It

was unnecessary, however, for the moment ; for Ugolino, advancing as rapidly, laid his hand on the Archbishop's arm and arrested him, while he said,

“Hear me, Monsignore, with patience—with your wonted patience ; for it will be all necessary—not to pardon, but to do justice. I know all. I know my chicken-hearted chaplain, a friar of St. Dominick, never having been at sea, nor, I believe, having seen blood before, fled back to Pisa at the very onslaught, and spread the news of total ruin. So much I learned at the Porto Pisano ; they did not, indeed, know how the Pisans had received the news ; but I, coupling it with the flight of my chaplain—” and Bonafazio, who had crept back to the door, hearing the Count always emphatically give him that title, muttered to himself,

“I see by that he means to protect me, for the name is too new to be a habit ; so, for the rest, he may throw as much of the blame as he likes upon my nerves. If they cannot bear much in one sense they can in another, and that is as much as most men can say. None are perfect.”

“I, coupling it with the flight of my chaplain,”

Ugolino went on, "which I had heard of, of course, from those who had seen him, understood the whole matter."

"Then you know he is here, Sir Count?" observed the Archbishop.

Ugolino shewed a very natural surprise; for that he had *not* foreseen, but he duly applauded the Archbishop's precaution, and again mentioned his anxious desire to endeavour without delay to repair the consequences of the lost battle.

The Archbishop smiled coldly.

"I am no stranger" he said, "to Count Ugolino's daring, nor to his power over the minds of men; but *all* human power has its limits, and I fear that even that which he possesses so pre-eminently will prove insufficient in the present crisis."

"You *fear*, Monsignore?" repeated Ugolino interrogatively, but in his most soothing, even in humble, accents: "let us understand each other, like men on whose understanding at this moment the fate of nations depends. Allow me then to ask whether these are words of politeness, or expressive of what your desire would be?"

"Count Ugolino, all the faculties of my soul have been absorbed by grief since the fatal news

has reached me. I have had no time to indulge in chimerical desires ; and even now, I feel unequal to aught except imploring an explanation of why that grief has been inflicted upon me and upon my people, so much beyond what you now tell me was necessary ?”

“Monsignore, I cannot answer for, or defend your informant ; but I would humbly suggest that since it has been so, from whatever cause, the facts which would have proved a deep and enduring affliction, if a worse had not been apprehended, will now be received as a blessing.”

“Hah ! my lord Count !” exclaimed the Archbishop, hastily. “You seem to have weighed the effect of proportion, ha ?—and it was your chaplain who brought us the intelligence !”

“Alas ! Monsignore,” the Count now said, somewhat changing his tone, “for the people’s woe there is but too much reason, and enough to excuse some exaggerations from the fears of such as escaped ; but all that humanity could do afterwards, I hope I may assert was done for the survivors. I remained myself part of a day at Porto Pisano for that purpose.”

“Your motives, my lord, will not go without their merits, whatever they may be,” said the

Archbishop, constrainedly; "but to my poor seeming, it would have been better to have either come or sent to where the suffering was greatest and unfounded, in order to give it some relief."

"Pardon me, Monsignore, but that is presuming that I could have been aware of its extent at Pisa."

The Archbishop cast down his eyes, for he felt that if there was a scheme, it was laid so well as to defy justice, if not equity. After a moment's pause, he said :

"Now, at least, my lord, no more time should be lost. If you will favour me with some idea of how matters really are, I will take immediate measures."

"Monsignore, your benevolent wishes have been anticipated." Every man capable of moving has been sent to his home: all Pisa will know before half an hour the particulars."

It might perhaps be pardoned to the Archbishop, if he winced for a moment under the consciousness that he was, by this precaution, placed in the position of the afflictor of his people while another stepped before him to dry their tears, and that other, Ugolino! Whatever he felt he endeavoured to conceal, however, but pro-

bably to one so acute as he who now watched him, as one on whose breath hung life or death, he betrayed it the more clearly, by saying :

“And you have also, I presume; explained to them on what grounds you mean to justify your having led those committed to you to certain death, contrary to the opinion of your council of war?”

Count Ugolino was evidently prepared for this charge, for without changing colour or losing temper, he quietly and respectfully answered,

“No, my lord, I have not. I give no explanations, as I acknowledge no authority, except from two motives—duty, or affectionate respect. The people made me their general-in-chief; if they erred in their choice the fault is their’s, not mine, but it is one which I flatter myself the world will forgive to them, and which they will forgive to themselves in memory of my past life. To them, then, I do not feel an explanation due; to you, Monsignore, my second motive applies: I therefore offer you that explanation in the few simple words that I believed I was acting for the good and for the honour of our common country; and the proof of it may be that I have lost not only every vessel fitted out by me for this occasion,



but what is infinitely dearer to me, my son, Count Lotto."

The Archbishop once more, for a moment, the dupe of his own originally affectionate feelings, received these assertions as proofs of Ugolino's sincerity, and the Count, alive to the slightest change in his auditor, went on :

"Yes, my lord ; you whose duty it has been to study human nature, must be aware that every human feeling, as indeed you said but now of human faculties, must have its limits. That I am, or have been an ambitious man, I do not deny, nor do I wish any one to forget, but at the same time, they should not forget that I have seventy-five years upon my head ; and that he who at seventy-five years of age would coolly betray his son, fighting by his side to death, for the ambition of the two or three years he might hope to drag on existence, must be, I will not say more or less than man, but a stark, staring madman."

"My lord, is your son dead, or only a prisoner ?"

"Monsignore, if I feared for the result of our present interview, I might tell you he was dead, and affect an agreeable surprise should it prove otherwise ; but I have no occasion to have re-

course to subterfuge. I do not know whether he is dead or a prisoner. I only know he is one or the other. And now, as time presses, and as I have shown my desire to bow as a son to you, may I ask what are your intentions,—what is your opinion,—your advice upon the present critical occasion? I am here to offer to second it to the utmost of my poor capacity.”

“I have already told you, Count, my faculties have received a shock from which they will require time to recover; so that, even if I had prevailed with you to afford me data for forming an opinion, I should not hazard offering one.”

“Monsignore, the state of affairs is this: the battle is lost—the number of slain immense—that of the prisoners, perhaps, even more in proportion, so that while there is wherewith to comfort many individuals in recovering some they had believed lost, the ruin to the country is imminent, inevitable, unless immediate steps be taken to repair the error; *my* error, if you will, in having encountered an enemy so numerous.”

We cannot attempt to translate the cold monosyllabic answer of the Archbishop, “Dunque?” which, while throwing the responsibility of suggesting means upon Ugolino, was all he could

trust himself to say in reply to the assumptions of frankness and of conscious right to public esteem and confidence which he felt were fast weaving their nets around him, even in despite of his, as it were, physical convictions.

“Dunque,” continued Ugoline ; “I would humbly ask in one word, whether I may hope still to find in you a prop for the country, and a friend and counsellor for myself?”

“For the country, my lord, I call it mine, and that little which I can do for it—”

“Forgive me for interrupting you in a moment so critical ; you will excuse me, not only for that, but for representing to you that to underestimate your own importance now would be to remove the last corner-stone of the tottering republic. Monsignore Arcivescovo, we have known each other long. You know my real faults, and have suspected me of more, and yet you have condescended to act with me, and I—I have availed myself of that forced condescension, as at times I have known and felt it to be, because—may I say it?—may I say it at a moment like this? because I knew the motive. I knew I was useful to the country,—a useful—an almost necessary instrument in your hands.”

"An instrument in my hands, my lord!" exclaimed the Archbishop, hurried by surprise out of his determination to listen to the end.

"Surely, if we may call that an instrument whose value depends upon its being in accordance with the master-mind. But, let the word pass; as I have said, you have found it advisable to act with me, and I need scarcely say that *for the country* (laying a marked emphasis on the words in italics) I could not pretend to act without you."

"*For* the country, my lord?—and against it?"

"Monsignore, I have never pretended to deny that I am an ambitious and a proud man. I have sons and grandsons who are dear to me; so dear, that as I would not sacrifice one of them for my own miserable two or three years of longer life, so I would not allow my honour, nor theirs, through me, to be unjustly sacrificed without vengeance."

"These, my lord, are not the principles of a Christian—'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.'"

"They are those of a father, Monsignore, and vengeance is his *who has the power to take it*," and again he laid a strong emphasis on the latter words.

“What would Count Ugolino imply?” demanded the Archbishop now throwing into his tone and countenance, or rather, perhaps suffering to appear in them, that indignation which he felt free to evince as a priest, if not as a man.

Count Ugolino evaded both by calmly answering, “Nothing, beyond the free and natural meaning of my words ; the country is in a fearful strait, perhaps through over-confidence on my part. I could have profited by that strait. If I had feared injustice, perhaps I might have been tempted to do so. I have many friends without these walls, Monsignore ; my name is not without its weight ; but I have preferred returning here, into your very palace : it rests with your eminence to decide whether I have expected too much in hoping to be allowed to devote all the years and energies that remain to me to repairing my involuntary fault ; if so, I shall be forced to take some other means of maintaining the name that I feel will descend to ages yet unborn.”

“But if it were already too late, my lord ?”

“It is *not*, my lord. I may have lost whatever influenced you to accept of my services, and thus I may be prevented from rendering them

farther available to my country, but that is the worst that can befall me ; for, as I have said, the people are already in possession of all the facts, and I feel that Pisa will not be behind the Porto Pisans in rendering justice to the man who shed his own blood to save a part of theirs."

"Your own blood, Count Ugolino?"

"I said my son was either dead or a prisoner."

The Archbishop felt the trammels tightening around him. He knew but too well that Ugolino boasted of no more than he had power to perform either for good or for ill ; and utterly unable as he and the republic were, at that moment, to contend against him, he felt that as the spiritual head and now almost the sole efficient guardian of that republic, whatever his private feelings might prompt, his duty was to crush them beneath the slightest hope of Ugolino's friendship. After a few minutes' silent reflection, during which he struggled, and probably prayed for strength over himself, he looked full into Ugolino's eyes, and, in a voice whose tone was hollow from constrained passion, he asked :

"Count Ugolino, what are your projects for the future?"

"To resume the power and place possessed previous to the battle," was the now determined answer; "to extend both as much as may be possible, consistent with the laws, in order that I may not be thwarted or controlled in the determination—mark me, Monsignore, *the determination* I have formed to show to the world that nothing is too difficult for me to do, or to repair."

The Archbishop quivered at an announcement at once so presumptuous and so plausible. He felt as if the devil himself, in his Satanic might, was before him, but that he had already lost the means of resisting him. The thought, "Were my own interests alone involved," was the only gratification he dared to allow to his indignation; while aloud he said,

"Such powers it rests not with me to invest you with."

"Pardon me, with you and with you alone it rests, and that solely by your silence as before—by your not opposing me. Allow me to send for the Anziani here—now—without further delay; let us hear their opinions when they have heard me, and the witnesses whom I have brought with me, and by them I am contented to abide."

“Such council might have been summoned elsewhere.”

“It is most true ; and if you can lay your hand on your heart and say that it would have been treating you with more respect, or have had a better appearance for my sincerity, I shall be sorry that such was not the plan by me adopted. Come, my lord Archbishop, there never was a moment when it more became us to remember that we are all—all—but finite beings, limited in power—limited in everything as you said to me but now,—and that the utmost any of us can do, is to choose the best, or if you will, the lesser evil. Let me send for the Anziani, they have at least a right to a voice, and, believe me, I seek to deprive no one of his right ;” and he rose while speaking, and advancing towards the door as if to ask permission to give the order, he paused there for the Archbishop’s answer.

After a moment’s delay, it came forth constrainedly from his trembling lips in the words, “Be it so ;” and then requesting leave, he retired in order to complete his toilet, while Count Ugolino went to join his companions, and recount to them as much as he thought fit of what had passed between him and the Archbishop.



## CHAPTER VIII.

IN repassing through the closet the only notice Ruggieri took of the trembling friar was by the words, "Sir, you are free to go about your business;" and so little time did Fra Bonafazio lose in profiting by the grant that he was the messenger selected by Count Ugolino to the Anziani; and not a little did the latter congratulate himself at the moment on having found one on whom he could rely to do his behest exactly according to the orders he should receive. No one knew better than Count Ugolino the influence of numbers upon numbers, and of opinion upon opinion. In summoning the Anziani, then, he took care to send first to those who were under weighty obligations—as many of them were to him—so as by giving them time to arrive and hear his will, for such might be termed his address to them, a sort of foundation should be laid on which it was easy to induce those who were tolerably indifferent

to commence to raise the fabric which he had planned ; so that, finally, when the disaffected—if such there were—arrived at last, they felt that it was safer for all parties to lend their hands to put the finishing stroke, than, by attempting to demolish it, crush themselves and all belonging to them beneath its ruins.

They had scarcely come to this conclusion, and communicated it to each other, by signs always intelligible to those who are anxiously watching for such, when Nino Visconti, together with the younger Morosini, made their appearance, summoned as they also had been. Had anything been wanting to give the casting vote to the cause of Ugolino, it would have been found in this meeting between him and those two young men, who had held the reins of government in the absence of their parents, and had conducted themselves so inoffensively and amiably to all, that their presence was like a cement between the parties ; nor, when Ugolino embraced them alternately, with an effusion apparently as full of affection and sympathy for one as for the other, was there a breast that did not feel softened towards the veteran, thus betraying, as it were, the depth of the mortification

which his pride and conscious merit seemed to forbid his confessing to others.

“Morosini,” he said, at last, as he pressed a hand of each of the young men within each of his,—“Morosini, you have lost your father, but only for a moment. By all that I hold dear, I swear his ransom shall be cared for before that of my own son—if, indeed, the latter is still within the power of ransom! You, Nino, you have lost many a dear friend,—amongst them your uncle Sotto; and you see your grandfather returned as a—but, no! I will not say, I will not think, so lowly of the noble hearts that are here assembled to—to do me justice. Yes,” he exclaimed, all at once changing from the tone of profound, and seemingly everwhelming emotion, to that of the orator, with a facility which electrified, not only the more confiding of his auditors but the Archbishop himself, who had reappeared on the arrival of the Anziani,—“Yes,” he repeated, “I shall have justice from those whom I address; for they will not visit upon me what has been the will of Heaven! What mortal valour could do, we did; and, if we attempted more, it was that I believed our valour more than mortal. Nor do I yet admit, that if we had

had only mortal valour against us, it would not have proved so : but thus it was not—thus it was not, O Anziani! The voice of Heaven made itself heard in the winds, and it was against us! We yielded then,—we were forced to yield,—but not to man! we yielded to him who is mighty to slay, but who is also mighty to save. And he will save us, my friends; he will save our noble republic yet. I know it, and I feel it in the numbers, both of men and vessels that have been spared, as if by miracle. Many are gone, it is true, but only enough to evince the valour with which we fought; while the numbers who remain are spared to recommence the struggle. Is it not so, my friends?" he cried, turning to the captains by whom he was surrounded, and who, inspired by his vehemence and energy, answered with a shout of enthusiasm. "You hear, you hear," resumed Ugolino, "the voice, the will, the desire, the hope of those who alone can judge of the past! Will you stifle that noble ardour, disappoint that hope, and allow ~~our~~ common country to fall a victim to your own ~~misapprehensions~~ misapprehensions? Or will you rouse yourselves like men, and give us the means to chastise those who have triumphed over us for once? Will you

refit our shattered vessels?—will you give us all the men the republic can possibly be made to spare, and money to entice them from elsewhere? You see I fear not to ask largely, for our all is at stake; and I, for one, cannot, for a single disaster, lose my faith in that glorious banner whose very name signifies, not unclouded success, but redemption after a fall!”

Here, again, it would be necessary to have lived in the times of which we write, to understand the effect produced upon the auditors by this speech, or, as we may say, appeal. Suffice it that not only did Ugolino obtain his object, but it was proposed by one of the Anziani on the spot, that entire power should be put into his hands, in unison with the Podestà (the youthful Morosini), to take whatever measures they should deem wise and prudent for the safety of the republic; which being carried with acclamation, the Anziani, Nino Visconti, Morosini, and the fifty captains went forth from the archiepiscopal palace, their different ways, but all to spread the same reports of the valour, magnanimity, and misfortune of Ugolino; while he occupied the time that he deemed necessary, to allow these reports to fructify ere he presented himself to the

people, in endeavouring to remove from the mind of the Archbishop whatever shadow of doubt, might still be lingering there ; and in order the more clearly to ascertain to what extent he had succeeded, in rising to depart, he said,

“And now that the affairs of the republic are no longer likely to be decided in a day, I, for my part, see no reason for a longer delay in that which sits so near to my heart,—namely, the union of our interests, our private interests at least, in the marriage of our children !” He had taken the Archbishop’s hand, as if to bid him adieu, ere he commenced these words ; and, as he concluded them, he ventured to press it in accordance with the feelings they expressed ; but he could not conceal from himself that he met with no response, either from the hand or the countenance of the latter. On the contrary, the hand seemed to undergo a slight movement, as if of withdrawal, while the countenance manifested evident signs of non-accordance, if not of disturbance. His silence left Ugolino no pretext for seeming unobservant.

“Monsignore,” he said, in a tone of low, but impressive interrogation,—“Monsignore, you do not repent of our arrangement ?”

"My lord, I am only so far repentant as I believe all such matters should be left to their natural course, unmixed with the interests of others."

"Pardon me, but it is rather of the latest to reflect on that; my grand-daughter's name is gone forth, and—"

"I know it," interrupted the Archbishop, "and you will err if you attribute more to my words than what they naturally imply. If the young people themselves are happy, I shall be so;" and as he pronounced these words in a more frank and disengaged tone, Ugolino felt himself without grounds for insisting for further explanation, but he deemed it prudent to add,

"For me, I have no difficulty in acknowledging, so much have I this union between our families at heart, that I shall be happy to add to Bianca's dower."

The archbishop bowed his head slightly as he replied,

"I am sure Count Ugolino will do all that is handsome; and I repeat, that if the young people continue happy, I shall be so; but I must confess I think that a season of such general mourning would be ill-chosen, and evil in prognostic, for

the celebration of a wedding that can no longer be considered a private one. If the young people are sincerely attached, this is perhaps the happiest period of their lives" (and a deeper shade of sadness passed over the old man's brow ; but whether the result of experience or of reflection, it would have been difficult to pronounce) ; "and if they are not, it is better to give them time to know their own hearts."

"These precautions, if I may not say doubts, have come since my departure," said Ugolino ; "may I ask if your eminence—"

"And if they have," interrupted the Archbishop, "methinks the events that have taken place might sufficiently account for added precaution on every subject, if not for some degree of nervousness in precipitating the destinies of others. Hear me, Count Ugolino ; the public mind and feelings, collectively and individually, have received a shock from which it will require some time to recover ; it is better to allow that time to pass ; and I have ill observed your granddaughter's character if she do not agree with me."

"And your nephew, Monsignore ?" inquired Ugolino, with all the concentrated ire of his pas-



sionate temperament flashing for a moment in his eyes, while his lips became rigid with sarcastic meaning.

“With my nephew I have not conversed upon the subject,” the Archbishop replied, with the calm of unmistakable truth; “but I do not believe him to be possessed of more prudence than belongs to other young men of his age.”

“Whatever might have been the Archbishop’s meaning in this observation, Count Ugolino, prepossessed with the idea of Ubaldino’s attachment to Bianca, interpreted it accordingly; and, persuading himself that the Archbishop’s nerves had really received the shock to which he himself attributed his present coolness upon the subject, he finally took his departure; he was amply if not perfectly convinced of having resumed, at least, his former place in the Archbishop’s opinion; of having, at least, insured his silence, for consistency’s sake; and for the present he contented himself with that.

If, however, aught had been wanting to the fulness of Ugolino’s content with the termination of a crisis so threatening, he would have found it in the reception that awaited him on his appear-

ance in the streets. The acclamations indeed that had greeted him on the morning of his departure for the fatal battle, admitted of no increase ; but, while they were partly politic, partly echoed and mingled with many a dissenting voice, in those that now resounded from the multitude, who were awaiting his appearance amongst them, there was sadness mingled with that enthusiasm—a sort of reverential sadness, with which we might greet one who had not only escaped from the jaws of death, while thousands had fallen around him, but who had, by his bravery, foresight, and prudence, caused the escape of others with himself ; and thus, by one of those springtides which sometimes do occur in the affairs of men, without any one being able to account satisfactorily for them, he found himself the idol of the city which he had almost depopulated. Concealing, as became a man of Ugolino's cool head and heart, the agreeable surprise occasioned, even to himself, by a reception which exceeded his most sanguine aspirations, he responded to it with apparently calm but pensive dignity ; and, as if too much overwhelmed with the pressure of public affairs to take further interest in aught else, he hastened his steps

towards the Palazzo del Popolo,\* where the Podestà and Nino were waiting for him, by previous arrangement ; and who, learning his approach by the acclamations that accompanied him, advanced to meet and conduct him to the council-room. There, he entered at once, and with, if possible, more than his wonted clearness, judgment, and energy, upon the steps necessary to be taken. On the spot he ordered that men should be sent, without a day's delay, from the towns nearest and belonging to Pisa, as Caprona, Asciano, Rippafrata, &c., to Porto Pisano, to repair any breaches in the walls, re-man the fortresses, and take such other precautions as might be necessary against a probable attack from the victorious Genoese ; and at the same time he ordered that such galleys as had been left there after the battle, should be forthwith brought to Pisa to be refitted ; nor did he omit reiterated and minute directions for attention to the sick and wounded who were there, desiring that, as these comprised several Genoese prisoners, they also should meet with that kindness and consideration which he trusted would ensure a return to those who had been carried prisoners to Genoa.

\* We might, perhaps, liken it to the "Town-hall."

In all this, and much more which was cared for at the moment, Ugolino addressed himself, indeed, to the young Podestà, as if scrupulously desirous not to infringe in the slightest degree upon his authority, while, by thus doing, he so won upon the confidence of the young man, that he felt himself complete master, at the slight cost of affecting not to be so.

It might now appear as if Ugolino's star were at the brightest—and in the present stage of the world,—in most European countries, at least, it would be so ; but then and there it admitted yet of increase, and that increase it presently received in the form of a deputation, which, while he was yet in the council chamber, came to wait upon him. That deputation was composed of the heads of all the religious orders, who, having heard of his long interview with the Archbishop, and the public reception which succeeded it, believed they should be meeting the wishes of all parties in paying to him that distinguished compliment. Nor was Ugolino slow to improve even this to his advantage, knowing, as he well did, how much it behoved him to give some better foundation to the favour of the moment, than the ever unstable caprice of the multitude ; he was

the first to speak of measures being immediately taken to collect the bodies of all whom the waves had engulfed and might have rendered up, with a view to giving them that interment which he said their valiant self-sacrifice for their country merited ; and when he ventured to propose that they who had died brothers in the same holy cause should not be separated, but find their last repose together in the new Campo Santo, and the decision to this effect became known to the surviving friends and relations, there was not a heart amongst them which did not feel that Ugolino had bestowed the best and most grateful consolation they were capable of receiving. To the deputation he then committed the task of preparing all for this melancholy ceremony ; and as there was no doubt but that such preparations would require the whole of the remainder of the day, an early hour of the following morning was fixed on for a search being made along the shores for such bodies as the lulling of the tempest might now have allowed to come to shore, and Ugolino made known that he himself would not remain at rest upon such an occasion. At length, every direction being given on every point that concerned the public welfare or contentment,

then, and then only, did Count Ugolino seem to remember that he himself had interests or feelings to be considered, and addressing a few parting exhortations to those around him, he at length bent his steps, again accompanied by the applauding multitude, to that home where a few short hours before he had not ventured to present himself. Of his reception from his own immediate family indeed he had never doubted for a moment; for, as we have said, he was one of those self-concentrated beings who, in giving life even to a numerous progeny, parted not with one particle of soul or free-will which he could retain. But while such was his aim, he was far too wise and too well versed in human nature to suppose that it could be attained merely by willing that it should be so. The unerring instinct of genius told him that genius alone could ensure it to him; and accordingly, while doubtful of what his reception might be from the public, he determined to await its issue before testing that of those who were sure to be eventually, however secretly, influenced by it. Triumphant as he now returned, almost at last bewildered by all that had passed like phantasmagoria before him, he longed, more perhaps than he had ever done in his life

before, for one quiet hour to collect his thoughts and feelings, and to allow his nerves to subside from the state of tension in which they had now been held for so many hours, or perhaps days. Arrived at his own door, then, embracing Nino and the other friends who had accompanied him, he intimated his desire to be left alone with his children, to weep, as he said, over that one who was missing.

“At a later hour in the evening return to me my friends,” he said, “and you, Nino, say everything that is kind and affectionate for me to your wife and sister, but add that all but my heart is exhausted; so that I will not ask to see them before to-morrow.”

## CHAPTER IX.

How, in the meantime had these two ladies passed the time that had intervened since the ball which seemed destined to be the parting fête given to joy and merriment by the Pisan Republic? They, like the rest, had been wakened on the succeeding morning by the dismal sound of the church bells ; for even Bianca, worn out by her very sufferings, had, towards morning, sunk into sleep ; and Nino had been one of the first who had gone out, urged as well by his own anxiety as by Beatrice's impatience, to endeavour to ascertain their import. But compelled, like the rest, to return with only the general news that the battle had been lost, and the supposition that Ugolino had been killed, there was not perhaps a house in Pisa, unless it might be that of Ugolino himself, where the suspense, anxiety, and agitation attained to a more overwhelming extreme than in his. It was not so much that



Ugolino was tenderly beloved by his descendants, as for the cause we have already hinted at, of his making himself the guiding spirit of all connected with him, so that his fortunes were considered the fortunes of all ; and even the gentle and retiring Bianca was called out from her own private sorrow to partake of the general awe and alarm. As for Beatrice, she seemed about to go out of her mind ; so great was the agitation and irritation which the suspense occasioned her ; as she foresaw, without difficulty, that the death of Ugolino at that moment, would be the downfall not alone of her party, but of her family ; Nino being, as she told him more than once in the course of the day, nothing more than the lichen which draws its life from the goodly tree or rock on which it grows. Nino himself, without expressing the matter so clearly in his own mind, felt that for some reason or other his sun would set with that of his grandfather, and he remained out the greater part of the day, as much to escape from Beatrice's ill-humour, as in the hope, hour after hour, of some further particulars arriving.

The day, however, wore on, as we know, without any such, and as night approached, and Ubaldino had not called, poor Bianca's sorrows

began again to assume the more acute form of private disappointment and oppression.

With the dawn of the following morning came the summons to Nino Visconti to meet his grandfather at the Archiepiscopal Palace ; and although he was not able for several hours to return and satisfy the anxiety of his family, Bianca had, through Adelaida, learned pretty nearly the real state of affairs ; for, Sattarello, after seeing the Count Lancia set out upon his mission to the Anziani, made it his business to pass from group to group in the streets, in the shops, and in all other places where he could penetrate, in order to learn how far his patron was likely to succeed. When assured of how matters were, he went to seek for consolation by imparting all to his sympathising Adelaida, who was not slow to pass the news to her young lady. When Nino returned, however, towards evening, after accompanying Ugolino to his door, Beatrice, although not wholly indifferent to the sufferings of others, where they brought no particular advantage to herself, soon lost sight of the general affliction in hearing confirmed the triumphant reception Ugolino had met with ; while Bianca, though still deeply sympathising in that affliction could not help feeling a

rush of hope to her heart, as she learned what Ugolino had given Nino to understand, namely that he and the Archbishop were more warmly united than before.

"Is it really so?" Beatrice inquired, when Bianca, whose health was beginning to show the effects of constant and concealed anxiety, had retired to her room,— "Is it really true that your grandfather and the Archbishop are still in a good understanding together? I began to suspect that Ubaldino's secession was, in part, at least, a stroke of his uncle's policy."

"Oh, not by any means," Nino replied; "on the contrary, they have been talking of hastening the marriage," for so much, Ugolino had thought proper to hint to more than Nino.

"Who has been talking of it?" asked his acuter wife. "They,—my grandfather and the Archbishop." Beatrice's proud blood came into her face.

"I trust it began, at least, with the Archbishop?" she asked.

"I really cannot tell you who began, but whoever it may have been I am rejoiced at the result."

"The result is to be seen," Beatrice scornfully retorted, "unless your grandfather means to

solicit the nephew, as it would seem he has done the uncle, and even then it may be doubted."

"Beatrice! enough. I will not stay to hear such insinuations where my sister is concerned."

"Spare your delicacy towards your sister, for where it may be more needful; I believe I feel much more for her than you do."

"You are cruel, Beatrice, you know how critical are our circumstances, public and private; you know how much we stand in need of the Archbishop's friendship and protection."

"Protection! protection! Is it possible I have heard aright?—and since when, may I ask, did one of the house of Este require protection of an Ubaldini or of any one?"

"I speak not of you, Beatrice," answered her gentle husband, in a tone of weariness. "I spoke of our party, and of ——"

"Our party!—what do *you* mean by our party? If you mean, as you ought to mean, the Guelphs, listen to a woman's politics—a woman's prophecy, and profit by them if it be yet possible. The Archbishop is a man without party-passions or principle, except as they may serve his aims or interests whatever they may be. His nephew is his idol—if *he* will vouchsafe to honour your

sister with his promised hand, the Archbishop *will honour* you and *me* with his *protection* for their sakes ; if not, we and every Guelph that ever lived or ever will live, will not weigh with him one hair of his nephew's head."

"What has brought you to this decision of the Archbishop's character?" asked her husband, with a painful, though unacknowledged conviction of her accuracy creeping over him, "*I* should have said he was a man of strong passions."

"Strength, like every thing else, is relative ; his passions, at present, are weak in presence of his judgment, or what he calls his conscience."

"How do you know, Beatrice?"

"By the small share of intellect Heaven has bestowed on me, and of which I offer you the service. Whatever pride or ambition this man may have had or has, can be as amply gratified by being head of the Ghibelines, as head of the Guelphs, perhaps, more so ; and as for feelings, all, all he has left, or perhaps all he ever had, are centered in Ubaldino. You have now the *mot d'énigme*, and make the best of it."

"Beatrice," Nino said, in an altered tone, "you would not, I trust, be capable of speaking to Bianca as you have done to me, about the con-

versation between the Archbishop and my grandfather? A word about her dignity or delicacy being compromised, would probably be fatal at the present moment."

"Fatal!—to whom or to what?"

"To all, and to every thing. You are not ignorant of the shadow that has come between her and Ubaldino. I know her—I am convinced I do—better than you do, however, more penetrating you may be in general. She will endure much, while she thinks she ought to do so, or doubts; but that once removed, I feel—I know—she would be lost to us at once."

"Lost to us!—how do you mean?"

"I mean," replied the brother, with suppressed emotion, "that if her life became not the sacrifice, she would devote it to God."

"And this is your pure, passionless Bianca?"

"Yes, madam," and his eyes flashed with that fire which, though slow and tardy, burst forth in after years, "this is my pure, my passionless, my *holy* sister, who consents to assume her sex's feelings and duties for the welfare and happiness of others; but whose angelic spirit is ever on the watch to resume its place amongst the blessed!" and he rushed out of the room and out of the

house, which was the usual termination of discussions with the haughty Beatrice. Haughty though she was, however, she this time, felt the truth of Nino's words ; and if she could not bow her spirit to determine, even with herself, not to speak on the subject to Bianca, she at least, did not determine to do so, unless provoked to it by Ubaldino's conduct, and this from her was a great deal conceded.

Before retiring to rest she visited Bianca in her room, and informing her of such further particulars respecting the funeral that was to take place next morning, as Nino had furnished her with on his return, she inquired whether she felt equal to accompanying her to the cathedral, there to meet the mournful company on its return ; adding, that the Count Ugolino had commissioned Nino to say that he thought their doing so would have a good effect.

"Oh surely, surely, let us go," Bianca eagerly exclaimed. "For the effect on others I cannot answer, but I am sure that to myself it would be most consolatory."

"Consolatory !" repeated Beatrice ; "methinks you have not needed consolation so little for a long time."

Bianca at these words raised her sweet, dove-like, asking eyes to her sister's face, while a faint tinge came over her pale cheek. Beatrice saw the question and the hope, but the latter was stronger than she felt herself authorised in encouraging; and so with a smile she bade her good night and retired. She intended the smile to be indifferent and meaningless, as indeed it was; but she forgot that she, on whom it fell, saw it through the medium of prepossession, and with its fancied reflection on her own sweet lips she fell into the calmest and most genial slumber that had visited her for several nights.

At an early hour on the following morning, as had been decided, almost the whole of the population of Pisa set out to revisit the banks of the river and the shores which had hitherto served as the resting place of so many of the best and bravest of their brethren. The procession,—for some degree of processional order was observed, even in their departure,—was headed by the chiefs of all the religious orders dressed in their clerical habits; next to them came the secular priests, who were followed by the lower ranks of church officials, after them came the people in such order as they themselves deemed most becoming; and



here indeed the heart sickens, and the pen becomes powerless in the attempt to describe the sights that, after some miles of walking, met the searching eyes of that multitude. The storm blowing from the shore, together with the distance from the scene of battle, had, as we have said, for many hours prevented any vestige of the lost from appearing; but when the storm fell it seemed as if the waves, indignant at being delayed in their friendly task, must now have performed it with tenfold energy, from the heaps of slain, and mangled remains which they had brought, and were still bringing, to ask for those last rites so dear to every Christian heart, from those for whose protection they had died. It seemed, indeed, as if more than chance had been there at work already, for, in one single heap, upwards of three hundred corpses were found,\* already nearly covered with the light drifting sand and sea weed which they had carried with them, as if anticipatory of the delay that was to occur, while hundreds of others lay scattered here and there, seeming to refuse all fellowship until recognised by the loved ones they had left behind them. But dreadful as were such sights,

\* A fact.

and heart-rending as were the shrieks of women, and sometimes even of aged or very young men, as hurrying to and fro in greedy search, as it were of anguish; they recognised beloved friend or relative, it was all less fearful than the shock of hideous disappointment which many met, as gazing out upon the wide waters for those they had not found, now and again the bounding waves lent a mimic motion to some body which they bore, and when the fond deception of the watchers was at the highest it threw, as if in cruel mockery, blue and disfigured corpses at their feet.

The ecclesiastics wisely forbore for some time to attempt putting the least constraint upon the woe—in some cases the wild despair—excited by such sights, even in those few who had no individual interest in them; and when at last it became necessary to do so, it was by appealing to the sufferers themselves, and asking whether they desired that their beloved should be exposed yet another night to the winds and waves, and all the chances of such a resting-place. Horror is ever ready to change its object and its form. At this picture, those who had most wildly refused to be unclasped from the remains of

husband, son, or lover, now were the first to stand up, and urge those less distracted than themselves to hasten their removal to that beautiful resting-place, the promise of which brought such comfort to many an over-sick heart at that moment, as to cause more than one to exclaim to some beloved corpse, "Oh, if you could but even know where you are to lie this night!" and there can be no doubt but the knowledge would have softened the dying pang, however the spirit might now be indifferent to such distinctions.

A beautiful sight succeeded—morally beautiful at least; and in its effects upon the beholders, it proved its superiority and power over all that was revolting to the senses. The ecclesiastics sent forth a voice amongst the mourners, to say that they would, with their own hands, there, upon the spot, perform the last human offices about the dead; for which pious purpose every necessary had been provided; and be themselves the alternate bearers of the biers. Yes! it was a beautiful voice—a voice of charity,—for it at once arrested grief in its headlong current, earthwards, and turned it aside into the channel of gratitude and blessing for the pious offices, which

gradually elevated the feelings towards heavenly hopes and comfort.

While this scene was enacting on the shore, Ugolino was not unmindful of his part. About the same time that the procession began to move from the shore, he, accompanied by Nino, the Podestà, the Anziani, and several of the minor authorities who had remained to attend him, set out on foot from Pisa to meet them ; and no sooner did they perceive the procession approaching, still preceded by that symbol whose motto is to suffer, than drawing themselves up along each side of the road, they waited until the last bier had passed, and then Ugolino, with head uncovered, and an expression of grief on his countenance, and calm sympathy in his bearing, took his place immediately behind the secular priests, nor deviated from it, apparently even in thought, until they arrived, at the fall of evening, in the Piazza della Cattedrale ; that spot from whence, only three days before, the same population had set out upon the chase, in all the wild exuberance of animal spirits, excited by joyous anticipation ; and now, if it were not that we have too many proofs of the inscrutability of the ways of Providence, and of the certainty that his

punishments and rewards do not follow in this world,—at least according to our short-sighted judgments—might we not be tempted to say that the seeming profanation of that sacred spot upon that morning had drawn down its retribution ? But if we presume to indulge imagination upon such subjects, let us, at least, carry it a little further, and hope that, with that retribution, the offence was washed out for ever.

## CHAPTER X.

THE archbishop, with his functionaries, was already waiting in the cathedral for the return of the procession ; and, as the first bearers approached, he himself, again in full pontificals, descended the steps, and, meeting them there, blessed, and sprinkled a few drops of the water which, emblematically, cleanses the sinner entering into as passing out of this world, upon each coffin, and signed to them to bear it into the vast church, where walls, altars, pillars, paintings, and pulpit were hung in such deep mourning as could not fail to satisfy the most craving heart amongst the mourners. Nor shall we here attempt a further description of the rites by which the Roman Catholic Church seeks to compose the spirits both of the quick and the dead. In our opinion all that is offered in sincerity of heart, as homage to God, should be respected by man, at least for that reason ; but as, alas ! we do not

presume to hope that our weak pen could ensure that respect from all, to forms which many disapprove, we shall only add that, then and there the effect of those forms, combined with the preceding and accompanying circumstances, was such as, perhaps, have seldom if ever been produced before or since upon a like number of individuals. The gloom of the hour, when all light except that of the death-torches surrounding the coffins had disappeared,—the number of those coffins—the glare of those red torches upon all the dismal hangings around—the extent of the cathedral, yet all too small for the crowds who would press into it—the heart-felt groans—the stifled sobs—the hysteric shrieks—and yet, solemn, deep, though not always steady, over all, the voice of the archbishop ushering, as it were, so many beings into the presence of their Creator! No! modern times and modern feelings cannot do justice to the effect of such a scene, even if a modern pen were capable of describing it. Let us leave it then, as the imagination of each may depict it, and turn to other feelings which the circumstances of the world, or of our nature, have left more unchanged.

In one of the darkest and remotest corners of

the intricacies of the Cathedral, were to be seen two female forms, one of whom with her head buried between her hands, seemed using all her force of mind and body to suppress the nervous excitement and sympathy which were shaking her limbs as if in an ague fit ; while the other, half distracted between her anxious attention to her who seemed, from their different appearances, to be her mistress, and her desire not to lose any part of the services going forward, now strove to press a bottle of essence between the rigid fingers of the lady, now whispered her some words of such magical effect as to keep up her spirits, that it was folly to yield to the nerves, &c., and anon, presuming upon her own good looks, or the gallantry of her countrymen, with little ceremony elbowing herself a step or two forward so as to catch a glimpse at what was passing, but never forgetting to tear herself from the indulgence before her lady could, as she decided, have had time to faint. Bianca, however, for it was she, did not feel inclined to faint ; her only apprehension was that the excitement of her nerves, and the weakness of her spirits, would have rendered her unable to suppress the screams that she felt were but too ready to re-echo those which occasionally



broke forth around her. To attempt making her way out of the church from the corner where, previous to the arrival of the multitude, she had ensconced herself, was, as Adelaida assured her and believed, impossible. Beatrice, who had in vain urged her sister to accompany her and some other friends to the reserved, and consequently more conspicuous part of the church, had proceeded thither without her, leaving her in charge of Adelaida and a footman ; the latter of whom, however, soon finding an excuse in the distance which respect imposed between his person and that of his young lady, suffered the crowd to move him gradually forward, until he found himself much more in the vicinity of Beatrice than of Bianca.

As the mournful ceremonies proceeded, and in part, perhaps, owing to the church becoming momentarily more and more heated, both from the torches and the still closely-wedging crowd, Bianca felt her agitation becoming uncontrollable ; at last she raised her head from her hands, and looked round, as if asking of any one some relief. Adelaida, now thoroughly alarmed, again pressed the essence to her nose ; but, seeing it produced no effect, she was about to resort to some desperate

expedient to get her lady forced through the crowd, when Bianca felt an arm gently but firmly pressed, supportingly, round her shaking and now almost sinking form ; while a voice, only too precious to her ear, whispered,

“ Bianca ! Bianca ! dearest ! you are ill—trust yourself to me—do not be alarmed ; I will get you out ;” and at the same moment Ubaldino, whose person was well known to the populace, succeeded in forcing an opening through the crowd, which pressed back before him and her whom he almost carried along with him : all the more readily for Adelaida’s reiterated assurances to all around her that the lady was no less a personage than the Count Ugolino’s grand-daughter.

Arrived in the open air, Bianca’s spirits immediately felt the beneficial influence, and soon found further relief in the salutary and natural effusion of tears : she had shed many in the course of her short life—some for herself, and yet more for others ; but it had never before been Ubaldino’s lot to see her shed them, except the few furtive drops on the fatal day of the chase ; and, as he looked upon her now, dressed in the deepest mourning, as were almost all who attended the cathedral on that awful occasion, and beheld the

paleness of her countenance and the attenuation already commenced in her form, and by her mourning dress rendered more conspicuous, while her gush of sorrow was infinitely too overwhelming to be the effect of even the deepest public sympathy, his whole soul, touched as it already was by the prevailing circumstances, dissolved into a passion of tenderness and remorse, which again himself mistaking for a return of first love, he murmured into her ear with that self-deluding earnestness which, perhaps, never yet failed to delude the ear of her who desired to believe it true—

“You will take cold, love, you will take cold, coming thus out of the heated crowd into the night air; and no possible means of conveying you more quickly than by walking to your house! Nor are you even able to walk!” he exclaimed, with the accent of tender anxiety.

“Oh, yes, yes,” she said, smiling; “thus supported I feel quite strong again; so strong, that I have no excuse for returning home at present; and as my grandfather wished that all his family should appear at these sad obsequies, I shall, with your leave, wait here, in the cool refreshing air, until, the services finished, the

dead are transported to their last resting-place. See! the moon breaks forth at this moment, as if to point it out to us, and how purely beautiful the Campo Santo looks in that flood of cold light! Oh! how sweet, how appropriate a resting-place! and filled as it is with earth steeped in the Redeemer's blood! I could almost envy—could you not, Ubaldino—those who are about to take their rest on so holy a bed? But forgive me," she exclaimed, suddenly checking herself, on perceiving the fixed and mournful attention with which he was gazing upon her. "Forgive me," she repeated, smiling faintly, "for—" but he, in his turn, interrupted her, by catching her hand, and pressing it warmly, but respectfully, between both his, as he exclaimed,—

"Forgive you, Bianca! *forgive you!* What a word from *you* to *me!* Bianca, I have been a wretch! but it is past—yes, I feel, I swear that it is past! and I will tell you all! My senses have wandered from you, Bianca!—let not that shock your delicacy, my best love. The senses, unguarded by religion, are not for the pure, like you, and will wander, for that reason; while, with that heavenly guardian, they never can do so. Yes, they were by you raised above our

grovelling nature, but they fell again; but now, now I feel they shall fall no more! Bianca, my uncle has spoken again to me of our union. I heard him—not as I ought to have heard him, with such a message from Heaven—but all that has passed to-day—these awful scenes—this holy hour—your illness—your heavenly enthusiasm—yes, my soul is yours, all yours again; and let me here, all good, all angelic as you are, let me take a shield against my own weak, wavering nature, by a vow, which—” But that vow was doomed never to be uttered. The last word was yet upon the lips of Ubaldino, when Beatrice, having haughtily waved back the crowd on all sides around her, made her way in unfeigned anxiety, although with much demonstration and pomposity, to Bianca’s side, and poured forth such a torrent of inquiries, mingled with reproofs and lamentations for herself, that there was no possibility of the lovers, continuing their conversation, or even preserving the tone of their holy and happy enthusiasm.

In gazing around her from her reserved enclosure, as was her habit, Beatrice had perceived the footman whom she had appointed to attend upon Bianca. Supposing that she had also advanced,

Beatrice dispatched one of her own attendants to conduct her to the enclosure : but he not finding her even where the footman had left her, returned to mention the circumstance to Beatrice, who, alarmed at once for her, for the family dignity, and perhaps in some slight degree fearing the displeasure of her husband on such an occasion, immediately decided upon disturbing every one and everything within her sphere, by insisting on getting out of the enclosure and the church with the greatest possible fuss and uproar, and succeeded as we have seen.

As if to prevent the possible recurrence of such a catastrophe, she now drew Bianca's arm within her own,—an honour she seldom conferred upon her,—and, being already tired of ceremonies in which all were too deeply absorbed to have a thought or a glance for her, she decided that it would be imprudent again to enter the church or Campo Santo, but that, as the Count wished their presence to be observed, they should take their places on the steps of the great portal through which the procession was to pass, and where it was impossible that any one person should follow it without observing them. Bianca made some attempt against a proceeding so conspicuous ; but

the little hope of prevailing left her without spirit or will to offer useless expostulation, and she took her place beside Beatrice in quiet resignation.

The evening advanced into night before all was terminated ; and, at the moment that Beatrice began to talk of returning home, and that Bianca's heart whispered her that Ubaldino would surely soon be able to find an opportunity for the vow he wished to make and she to accept,—as she felt that where the principles are upright, as she knew his to be, a solemn promise is often a spell which a timid or impressionable nature is even afraid to break,—at that very moment, as if destiny had decided against her hopes, a messenger from the Archbishop arrived to say that he requested the attendance of his nephew in the sacristy, where he felt himself somewhat indisposed by fatigue and emotion.

“Good night, then, Ubaldino,” Beatrice subjoined before he had time to answer. “It is so late that of course we need not expect to see you again this evening ;” and, moving forward as she spoke, Ubaldino had only time to press Bianca's hand with tender emphasis, while his eyes expressed how much he was annoyed by the delay.

She, however, was at that moment far above the feeling of annoyance from a temporary delay. Her confidence in him had indeed already received too many shocks, and she had seen too many instances of the facility of his nature, and the power of external impressions over him, to feel that unclouded happiness which a very few days before she would have felt from such a burst of genuine feeling as he had that evening betrayed ; but still, far, far was she, in her womanly nature, from being able to imagine the full power of those external impressions, while her refined sense of honour made her consider a vow meditated almost as a vow uttered.

When a child, her explanation of a decision formed had been "I have promised to myself," and she knew no difference between such and uttered promises, until sad experience forced upon her the knowledge of good and evil. But, besides the hope she felt this evening from Ubaldino's emotion, the scenes she had witnessed of death and desolation, all seeking repose or consolation in the bosom of the earth believed to be bedewed with a Saviour's blood, had so elevated her feelings and detached them so much from earth, its passions and its feelings, that, even at the moment that her ear



was soothed by, and her heart and lips responded to, her lover's words, she could have laid her hand upon her heart and said it was more, far more for his sake than for hers! The delay, then, of a few hours in the uttering of his vow caused her no sensation of real pain even at the first moment, and, before she laid her head upon her pillow that night the thought crossed her mind—although she gave it no welcome there—that it was perhaps as well that the vow should be uttered in a moment of less excitement.

And the last of her waking visions were the death torches, the palls, the Campo Santo.

"It was a vow offered to the dead!" she said, half starting up in horror; but she smiled at herself for doing so, and, despite some symptoms of a severe cold, composed herself to rest.

On the departure of Ugolino from the Archbishopal Palace two days before, when he had come to give his own account of the battle and to be re-elected, the Archbishop had retired to his private apartments, giving orders that for no person, nor for any purpose, was he to be intruded upon until two hours should have elapsed; at the end of that time he caused his nephew to be summoned to his presence. Ubaldino, who like

every other human being in Pisa, was in a state of what may be called political excitement, rejoiced in a summons which he hoped would afford some clue to unravel the mystery in which all seemed to be enveloped; thus he was but little prepared for what really awaited him—he expected, we may say flattered himself, he should find his uncle nearly as much excited as himself; and, perhaps, even willing to seek some support, or at least distraction, from discoursing with one he loved so well. He found him to all appearance as calm and self-possessed as he had ever seen him in his life—much more so than he had been for many days past.

The very moment Ubaldino had put his foot within the apartment where his uncle stood, waiting for him and apparently determined that the conversation should not be a long one, he addressed him in these words,—

“Nephew, I wish to know whether it be your intention to fulfil the engagement you have at least sanctioned with Count Gherardesca’s granddaughter?”

Had a pistol been discharged at Ubaldino’s ear it could not have caused him to start more uncontrollably, or the blood to rush more hastily over

his face than did these, the first words his uncle had uttered upon this subject since that day when the one asked the approbation which the other almost as ardently desired to grant.

The Archbishop saw the start and the blush.

"Calm yourself," he said, "my words contain no hidden daggers. I simply ask if your honour—*my* honour—are yet unstained?"

The young man raised his eyes to those of his uncle with the involuntary, even unconscious expression of ingenuous youth.

It met with no sympathy; the Archbishop's countenance was unchanged, as he continued,

"I await your answer—my question is a clear and simple one. Are your honour and mine unscathed?"

"They are," came forth at last in a low tone from Ubaldino's trembling lips.

"It is enough," his uncle said; "you are incapable of lying. It is enough, for the present, the circumstances of the country admit of no more;" and without uttering another word, or looking again upon his nephew, he retired into an inner closet from which he had apparently emerged only for that meeting.

Ubaldino remained as if nailed to the spot

where he had left him ; for he felt, without taking time to understand exactly how, that he had riveted more closely than ever, by the two monosyllables he had uttered, the chains which for some days past he had been almost decided upon seeking means to break ; and, by entering into no farther explanation, exacting no promise, nor seeming to suppose any further caution necessary, the Archbishop had made one of those happy hits for his purpose which strong minds often make in dealing with weak ones, without other calculation than the simple instinct of that strength.

When Ubaldino went forth from the palace, it was as one rather astounded at his own position than with any idea of being able to rebel against it ; and the chance circumstance of seeing Genivra laughing with Buonconte in one of the windows of her saloon, as Ubaldino was on his way to meet the mournful procession returning from the shores, gave him a feeling of indignation, which, if not exactly all that he wished to believe it, served for the moment to turn his thoughts with approbation, at least, to her who, he was very sure, was incapable of smiling that day even upon a lover's blandishments. All that followed was not calculated to lessen his temporary tribute to Bianca's

superiority ; and to her value as a companion for a being, who was one day to be like those, on whose cold remains, all attention was then turned ; and when, in a spirit sincerely touched by the circumstances around him, he also sought refuge in the less conspicuous part of the cathedral, and there recognised Bianca in the agitated form which had for some minutes fixed his attention, the burst of feeling which followed would not, perhaps, have been unnatural in one of yet stronger character.

## CHAPTER XI.

THE last offices paid to the dead with such unusual solemnity and consideration, and another night passed over, the inhabitants of Pisa waked next morning, in general, as if to a new state of existence. Many and many indeed were the hearts where the wounds received were too deep, too near the life-blood, ever to be closed again; but for the lighter sufferers—*they* soon forgot their private griefs in the generality of the calamity, the public condolence, the circumstances of the republic. In short, such is our sad nature, or should we not rather say—such and so many are the helps and resources given to that nature by its great Author, that in the very bustle and variety caused by the calamity itself, many soon found a degree of comfort, and others founded thereupon a sort of public self-importance, which they would, without their share in that calamity, have gone to their humble graves without having imagined themselves to possess.

The city indeed, for some time, assumed the appearance of one vast senate-house, each believing himself now entitled to a voice on every subject of public interest, in right of the loss he had sustained, or even of his share in the first general alarm, and as, in order to prove their capabilities for legislation, or at least to ensure being listened to, they thought it safest and best to re-echo the sentiments of those really in power, even this popular assumption was, for the time, favourable to Ugolino's views. Lancia, on the other hand, yielding to his irascible temper, so far as not to show himself, or suffer any one over whom he had influence — and amongst the Ghibelines they were not a few — to show themselves at the funeral procession, which he designated a *coup-de-théâtre* of Ugolino's, by this means dissevered from his side and that of his party many a wavering heart. He who wishes to hold any place by the suffrages of the people, should always address himself to their hearts rather than to their heads, to their prejudices rather than to their principles. The uneducated man, however generous as an individual, must always be a selfish politician; for he knows his own wants better than those of

others. Nor was ~~Ugolino~~ without other props to his swelling greatness. The *Nin gentil Giudice*, deserved the cognomen better than many do whom poets sing. His nature was remarkably like to that of the sister whom he loved so well ; and while Ugolino revolved upon his sleepless pillow plans for making himself popular with the people, his grandson slept the sleep of peace, in the sweet consciousness, beginning to dawn upon him, that he had the power and the will to soothe the sufferings, and to improve the condition of many thousands of his fellow-creatures ; for, as yet, he was contented that *his* heart felt and his hand acted ; nay, his purse—for he was rich—was emptied in this holy cause, while Ugolino talked, enacted laws, and received all the glory and the thanks.

The Archbishop, in the meantime, seemed to have changed his character, and to yield himself a passive reed upon the current of events ; while the declared chiefs of the Ghibeline party, perceiving their star under a total eclipse, either relying upon his judgment and supposed secret principles, or having come to a similar conclusion for themselves, gradually began to follow his example, and many withdrew once more to



the retirement of the country. The testy old Lancia, however, with a few others like himself, still keeping his place, were it only, as he said, publicly on all occasions to curse the tyrant as he passed; which, however, for the present at least, produced no other effect than a determination in that tyrant to keep his eye upon the old rascal, as he began to call him, until he should compromise himself, so as to justify his exile or his death. But, while all wondered at, and most men envied the exaltation of Ugolino, believing, in the heart's ignorance of its own rapacity, that he must be happy, that restless spirit had not a moment's repose from planning how or by what steps he could rid himself of even the name of a colleague in power, as the preliminary necessary to declaring himself sole Lord of the Republic, if indeed republic he intended that it should continue. The youthful Morosini was but the deputy of his prisoner-father, it is true, and a mere weapon in the hands of Ugolino, which, while the latter was possessed of the people's confidence, he wielded as he pleased; but he was far too acute not to be aware that, that confidence lost, and the weapon wrenched from him, it might become a

powerful one in other hands against him. He had pledged his word, in presence of all assembled in the archiepiscopal palace, the eventful morning of his return from the battle, that the ransom of the elder Morosini should be the first cared for—he kept his promise.

The news was soon spread that Morosini was set free, with the sole condition never again to set his foot within the limits of the Pisan republic. His son, of course, was no longer his deputy, and Pisa was without a Podestà. And now what was likely to be the consequence? The Archbishop, who, whatever might have been his real feelings, had so long held the balance between Guelph and Ghibeline with honour to himself, and such safety to the republic as perhaps the circumstances admitted of, who had watched Ugolino's every movement apparently with the jealous eye of a father for his children, even while Ugolino professed himself a Ghibeline, would he now betray his own principles, lose the honour of so many years, by placing or allowing to be placed the two great posts of power in the person of him who might be called his great antagonist, merely on account of a family connection, and that at the very

moment when Ugolino, by renewing the offer of his grand-daughter's hand, had shown how great was his anxiety to conciliate the Archbishop, or, in other words, how necessary he felt his alliance to be?—would the Archbishop, at such a moment, when he had nothing more to gain and all to lose, calmly bow his head and suffer Ugolino to rise upon his shoulders to a height which was, if not directly contrary to the letter of the law, certainly contrary to its spirit? Yes, to the amazement of all he did so, by offering no opposition to the monstrous proposal—which, however, was no longer made first in confidence to him, but canvassed openly before it reached his ears—that Ugolino should unite in his own person the two great posts of government, that of Capitano del Popolo and Podestà, and by a great majority of votes the measure was carried, and he became in name what he had for some time past been in reality—the great and sole ruler of the republic—and was thus in reality what he still desired to be in name—supreme lord of Pisa.

Such was the state of public affairs when the deluded people were informed that all of a sudden a league was being entered into between

Florence, Genoa, Lucca, and several minor states, the basis of which was that let the result of the impending war between any one of these states and Pisa, with each of which that noble but fore-doomed republic was on hostile terms, be what it might, not one of the others should cease to take vengeance on her, until not one stone was left standing upon another. So much Ugo-lino took care should be widely known, while he suppressed the fact, that to his own immediate family, and to that of the Visconti, though Pisans, was reserved the privilege of entering into the league upon certain stipulated conditions irrelevant to our story, as would be also the particulars of his having prevented a treaty of peace between Pisa and Genoa, with, of course, an exchange of prisoners, which, the latter having suffered also tremendously in the late battle, seemed inclined to come into at the particular instance of the Archbishop.

Nor must modern politicians, who have not given themselves the trouble of studying the history of those times, sneer at the possibility of such mysterious proceedings in states of such circumscribed limits and population, for the difference between the magnitude of those states and

the most extensive of the present day sinks into nothing when compared with the difference between the facility of acquiring knowledge of every species then and now ; a journey from Pisa to Florence being then, in all except time and money, a much more formidable undertaking than is now a journey from London to Florence ; and, consequently, producing much greater effect upon the mind : and when to this we add the paucity of the lowest elements of erudition amongst the various classes of society at that time, and the passive state to which uninformed intellects sink in presence of the informed few, we should rather wonder at the force of that natural instinct, which, finally, by breaking through those trammels, prevented mankind from degenerating into brutes, than feel surprise at its not having more rapidly progressed.

The consternation spread by the news of such a league against a state drained as Pisa already was of men and money, may more readily be imagined than described. Indeed the only part that seems now difficult to conceive is how three republics, considerable as were those of Florence and Genoa in extent and wealth, and that of Lucca in moral importance, without mentioning

the minor ones, did not feel themselves dishonoured in the inferiority implied by such a combination against a single state. The Pisans were informed of the league against them, and they believed it; they were *not* informed of the exception made in favour of the families of Gherardesca and Visconti, and they did not suspect it; and, as nothing renders human beings more confiding in those from whom help may be expected than a sense of danger, Ugolino before long found himself beset by prayers, addresses, and exhortations, which might be more appropriately addressed to a being of omnipotence, than to one who had so lately given a signal example of his fallibility. The incense, however, pleased him; and if he did not, like the hero of old,

“ Assume the God,  
Affect to nod,  
And seem to shake the spheres,”

he was not the less lavish of his promises to avert the threatened danger. But, while his own party, as we may henceforth openly call the Guelphs, became in some degree re-assured by his seeming confidence, the Ghibelines enjoyed, by anticipation, the defeat they believed it impossible for

him to avoid. That so cruel and disproportioned a league formed against their hapless country could be pleasing to any one amongst the latter is not to be supposed ; but, alas ! who does not know that the nearer any danger comes to our own persons or firesides, the more it excites the passions, if we must not say the principles of the best and bravest patriot amongst us ? And while passion is strong in one part, it must be weak in another ; nor is this one of the least fatal effects of civil war. Patriotism is the love of those born on the same soil, nurtured by the same air, inheriting and imbibing the same language, principles, customs, and though last not least, the same prejudices as ourselves. For this love we live, and fight and die together, for that which we call our common country, as we say our common church, but which, in reality, is an ideal soil or edifice, whose component parts are the beings that more nearly assimilate to ourselves, whose interests are our interests. Dissolve that bond—extinguish that love—dissever those interests, and what becomes of patriotism ? It is shaken to its very foundations, the coarser nature drives it from his breast as a phantom which has deluded him too long ; the gentler

smiles in regret, over the ruins of a beautiful dream from which he has been rudely awakened ! Thus, though we must not suppose that the sensations of the Ghibelines amounted to satisfaction, it cannot be concealed that after the first shock, there came, at least, a gleam of consolation in the probable downfall of him who had become the personal enemy of each, and when to this general probability was added, the knowledge that he had not only promised, but had actually undertaken in his own person, and by the force of his own eloquence, to dis sever Florence from that league, or, in other words, to cut off its right hand, by such a trifling sacrifice on the part of the Pisans, in the form of two or three of their less important fortresses, as not the most avaricious amongst them could object to, there was not a Ghibeline head that did not feel its pillow softer that night than it had been for many months. In the meantime, Gherardesca, himself, was not without intense anxiety for the success of his machinations, for, as may be supposed, his object really was to purchase Florence to peace, not with the Pisan Republic, but with himself, as supreme Lord of Pisa ; not with the “ King of the French,” but with the “ King of



France." When on the morning of his return from the last battle, he declared to the Archbishop that he had powerful allies, outside the Pisan Republic, he said no more, as the Archbishop well knew, than was strictly true; and in fact, such was the weight attached to his prowess as a warrior, to his talents as a statesman, and to his various resources as an individual; that, in the many roads open to him, his only embarrassment arose from the desire to select that which should lead at once to the highest pinnacle and the most permanent position. It was not easy to unite these two objects in the times of which we treat, even for those who were born with a right to aspire to them. Florence, Genoa, Lucca, and what we may call the Satellite States around, were, at the present moment, in a politically good understanding together; but, while any one of them would have made considerable sacrifices to secure to itself the services of such a man as Ugolino, or even to remove his preponderating influence from the fortunes of Pisa, they were by no means so disinterested in their friendship either for him or for each other as to desire to confer upon him aught that would cost them more than the purchased advantage, and, consequently,

not nearly so much as that to which his hopes aspired in Pisa. But, while he hoped, he feared. The coffers of the Republic were absolutely drained. The people had begun since the release of Morosini, to exhibit impatience for some further releases of the prisoners, and these could only be obtained by enormous ransoms; as the Genoese government, incensed at having been, as they justly considered, trifled with in the rupture of the late proposed treaty, evinced their determination to take vengeance on the persons of their hapless prisoners for that as well as for the losses they had sustained, though victors in the recent battle. Men had been collected from Maremma and from every city or province where the Pisan Republic could command, and these men were now, every day, regularly drilled under Ugolino's own inspection; but immense sums of money would still be necessary, ere they could be fitted to replace the army which had been destroyed.

The damaged vessels had been brought into dock, and their repair often and loudly talked of, but little progress had as yet been made. Ugolino's private fortune was princely; but, besides the number of his immediate descendants, who

were depending on it, it had by no means passed unscathed through his political career; and, in short, he was forced to acknowledge to himself, that before rejecting the offered privilege of joining the league against his country, it behoved him to ascertain whether it might be possible to purchase off the principal arm of that league by a slight sacrifice which would insure to him at the same time, the boundless gratitude and probable dominion of his country. With that blind fatality which is probably intended to be the retributive curse of the abettors of perfidy, the Guelphs, believing that because Ugolino had betrayed his own party he must be true to theirs, placed in his hands unlimited powers for the negotiation he now undertook; but, while he scarcely concealed his contempt for their imbecility, he knew full well that there were others lying in wait for one unwary step, and that the scales which now sealed the eyes of the Guelphs once removed, his double treachery would unite all parties against him, and that his ruin would be sealed. In this predicament he passed some sleepless nights, but the matter was pressing, and it was necessary to come to a decision.

Florence was at that time governed by what

were called Priori, elected every two months by a majority of votes, and as the Guelph party prevailed there at that time, the greater number of these Priori were usually of that party. At the moment that Ugolino undertook his great mission of detaching Florence from the league, the Priori had just been changed, so that those who had sworn to that league were no longer in office : this he considered as some little advantage on his side ;—for the rest, like the Anziani of Pisa, it was a part of the law that certain of these Priori, if not all, as often happened, should be selected from the commercial or trading classes : on this also Ugolino founded some hopes. He was, as has been said, peculiarly gifted with the most useful of all talents, that of a knowledge of human nature—the secret windings of the heart, at least in its corruption or its weakness, were as clear to his eye or to his sympathy, as are colours to those of the generality of mankind ; and he proceeded as simply and as confidently to work accordingly, as would a painter in filling up his canvas. He knew that the great object of every man's life *must* be his vulnerable point ; or, if there be exceptions, they prove the rule in the superhuman efforts required by the individual to guard against

that natural vulnerability. The Priori then, being mostly men of commerce, their object in life was neither honour nor glory for their country,—it was gain—gain of money. He was not unversed in history, at least in that of heroes and of warriors,—he remembered that Philip of Macedon had said, that to take a fortress he should only require a door large enough to allow a donkey laden with gold to pass through ; and although it was many ages after, that one of our own ministers declared that every man's conscience had its price, it appears that Ugolino had, in his time, come to nearly the same conclusion. Money, however, in those days and in ours, bore a very different nominal value : so let no one think too lightly of the consciences of the worthy Priori, upon hearing that Ugolino valued them each at one thousand ducats of Venetian gold,—a coin at that time recently introduced,—so that we may hope that the novelty went for more than the base lucre ! How to provide this money, however, and to offer it in secret, was no small difficulty in the present state of affairs ; and to levy it publicly for such an object, was not of course a subject to be thought of ;—money publicly offered could not have been accepted by any branch of the league,

and the consciences of the Priori were delicate upon this point. Ugolino had but one resource ; he sent for our old acquaintance, Fra Bonafazio, and told him he must procure that sum for him before to-morrow, and in the precise form of Venetian ducats.

Fra Bonafazio, upon receiving this command, gazed upon his patron in stupified silence.

“ ’Sdeath ! ” exclaimed Ugolino, stamping with impatience, “ do you not understand me ? or what do you stand staring at ? ”

Bonafazio made a step backwards towards the door. But as Ugolino glared upon him he became as it were fascinated there ; and his tongue mechanically expressed his want of comprehension. Ugolino repeated his orders.

“ And where, my lord, could I look for such a sum ? ” Bonafazio asked at last, forced to believe in spite of the fury of his patron, that he was sane.

“ Dolt ! have you lived so long in the convent of Dominicans, and dare to ask where you are to find so trifling a sum of money when the state requires it ? ”

“ Oh, Lord ! my lord Count, do not utter such words. Indeed—indeed—your lordship is mistaken ; or, if not, it is not for a poor brother like

me to know of such things. *Domine salve*—hem—hem—my lord, you forget our beautiful church, and convent, built by our own poor industry.”

“I forget nothing!” retorted the Count. “It is on that rich church and convent I rely.”

“Oh, my lord, you are too great a head to fall into the common mistake, that the more one spends the more one has to spend; and you forget, my lord—”

“I repeat, I forget nothing, sir! See that before to-morrow’s sun goes down I have the money, or—”

“Oh, yes, pardon me, my lord, you forget one thing at least, which is, that a convent never lets its money lie out without interest; you know a talent wrapped in a napkin—”

“In this I believe you,” said the Count, “and that it might not be possible for your prior to count out that sum before to-morrow; but the money I must have in some manner, so away about it as you value my patronage.”

“And the security, my lord? for this cord and these sandles will scarcely suffice for such with the sons of Mammon.”

“For the security—” and Ugolino paused and

seemed to hesitate, while his brow darkened, and his eyes emitted a sort of inward light. "Remember," he went on, suddenly changing his tone,—“remember, that this transaction lives and dies between you and me!”

“And him who gives the money, my lord?”

“Of course, but you answer for his fidelity.”

“My lord, may I ask, when you began to honour me with so high an opinion?”

“No matter. I will give substantial marks of it if you justify it now. The prior of your convent has not the bond of immortality in his pocket, and if he had, there are other convents—other means.”

“Oh, my lord, is it possible I understand you right? Well, I promise you, in my turn, that when I am prior of St. Dominick, you shall not want for six thousand ducats.”

The tone in which the jocose friar pronounced these words caused Ugolino to turn his eyes upon him with a scrutinising glance.

“Take care, sir,” said he, “I know how to punish as well as to reward.”

The friar ran his comic eye over his rusty frock and soiled slippers, as if to wonder where it could be inflicted, but trusting to that glance



to explain his meaning, and probably not deeming it safe to sport longer with the lion in his den, he, too, changed his tone and said,

“Let me go, my lord, and see what I can do; but—I am a free agent—is it not so? Only tell me what security I may offer; for, as I said before—”

“That of the Republic! signed by myself, and my grandson, Nino Visconti, who is to be my deputy in my absence!” was the reply that interrupted him now without any further hesitation. “The loan is to be made for the country—for the Republic—in its name. Sanctioned by us, who are its governors, its guardians; but as Visconti does not choose, for family reasons of his own, to appear in the matter, you are to know no agent but myself; and now go!” and Fra Bonafazio, with the tact in which he was far from deficient, left the room without another word, and without even raising his eyes again to his patron’s face.

## CHAPTER XII.

THERE was at this time established at Pisa, as probably in every other part of the then known world, where money was to be made by fair means *and* foul, a party of that people called Coarsini, who, while one part of the population was occupied in making money in the former manner, took upon themselves the latter; and, as we see too often even in our own day, they not unfrequently succeeded the quicker if not the better of the two. The wealthy convent of St. Dominick, and especially so active and intelligent a brother as Fra Bonafazio, could not be supposed to remain long in ignorance of the existence of these sewers of the commonwealth; and, odious as they were to all classes—expediency being a neutraliser whose power few can resist—it was to one of their *dens*, as the residences of such persons were called by all who were not compelled to enter them, that Fra Bonafazio now determined to

betake himself in the first instance, saying to himself, as he hurried stealthily along—

“ If I do not succeed, I am where I am ; if I do, I spare our prior an attack, for which I would as soon trust to his gratitude as to that of our beloved Capitano, Podestà.”

The remains of the one he selected is still to be traced at Pisa, opposite to the Church of San Michele, where the ancient smoke-stained walls seem to retain their power of exciting horror and disgust. It was then to be distinguished by the ponderous strength of its doors and window-shutters, formed as they were of oak, studded and secured by large nobbs and bars of iron, and when these were necessarily opened there was nothing to be remarked within, except the extreme precaution everywhere adopted to evade the scrutiny of the curious eye. The few who were authorised, or the many who were compelled by their necessities, to penetrate further, were met by a sort of private sentinel, a man of gigantic stature, armed with a suitably sized battle-axe, whose whole nature seemed to be condensed into the one hideous principle—to consider every man an enemy until he should be proved a friend. This brutal guardian once passed, the successive cham-

bers presented specimens of all the various sacrifices which penury was compelled from time to time to make to avarice, in order to preserve, by any means, the one dear, mysterious spark, in comparison of which the creation is as nothing to every human being! Into this den, where was known the true secret of converting everything into gold, Fra Bonafazio now made his way; and not without some creeping of the flesh, as he passed by on every side the various tokens of others' misery,—for he was far from being a hard-hearted man—the echoing voice of the giant guardian preceding him along the walls; and by the time he arrived at the door of the fourth chamber, a man appeared from within, who, learning that his object was to borrow money, on ample security, showed such signs of grisly satisfaction as the tiger may be supposed to do when he sees before him the bloody mess with which he is about to gorge himself.

“Enter, sir, enter,” he said; and at the same time turning to one with whom he had been previously engaged, but whom the frate, from the dim light within, could not distinguish, “You, I know, can wait for a few minutes,” he added. “Pass into that inner room, and I will attend you

as soon as this gentleman's business, which cannot last long, shall be dispatched," and the figure disappeared.

"And now to business," he exclaimed, turning again to the frate, and chuckling and rubbing his hands with an anticipation of exultation which might be imprudent in one whose mind was not already made up as to the exact extent of the accommodation to be afforded to the wealthy convent of St. Dominick. Bonafazio, whose decision was about as sturdy as his own, argued nearly from the same premises that his cause of exultation as yet depended upon him, and therefore, nothing daunted, he stated the sum required.

The usurer went through the usual routine of difficulties and delays.

"Pass we over all such, my master," replied Bonafazio. "I am here to lose, you to make money—the only question is how much will satisfy your avarice?"

"Avarice! avarice! that is a strange word to apply to the accommodation we wish to afford to . . . ."

"Usury, then, if that will satisfy you better," interrupted Bonafazio. "But to our purpose, in one word, for I must have the six thousand

golden ducats counted out by noon to-morrow."

"By noon to-morrow!" the usurer exclaimed, now unfeignedly surprised. "Is your prior then about to make another church start up by miracle?"

"And who told you my prior enters into this affair?" asked Bonafazio. "I swear to you he does not even know of it. But who my employer is shall be the sealing clause of our transaction."

"Hah!" exclaimed the usurer, as a new light broke in upon his mind, the whole of whose little force being concentrated to one small point, did not on that want for acuteness.

"Hah!" repeated the friar, provoked with himself for having given even so much information to his inquisitor. "And what does hah! mean, may I ask? I presume there are many in Pisa who want money somewhat more than does the Prior of St. Dominick's."

"But there are not many who would venture to ask it from me," replied the usurer chuckling yet more than before. "Come, my friend, you shall have the money; there is my hand upon it, and that without asking even the name of the security, until the last gold ducat rings upon the

counter ; and, lord ! how these Venetian ducats do ring !”

“ Before I accept either your hand or the money, however, I will know the depth of your conscience,” replied the other more and more provoked, if not alarmed, at the cool confidence the usurer seemed to have in his own penetration.

“ Hear it, then,—and hear it without bargaining or discussion. With your prior, through respect for his calling and character I might have been more weakly generous, especially as his wants could not have been so urgent ;—as the matter stands, my last words are these—the six thousand gold Venetian ducats to be counted out to you to-morrow, here, or where you please, at that moment when you procure me full legal security that on to-morrow twelve months I shall receive the sum back again, with three thousand more by way of interest.”

“ Repeat your terms,” said Fra Bonafazio in a tone of interrogation that might make the fortune of a modern actor.

“ Nine thousand ducats, to be paid to me on to-morrow twelve months.”

The friar on hearing this repeated, uttered

not a single word, and only indulging himself in a certain application of the forefinger, or, as we say, the thumb, to the tip of his nose, and the other thumb to the point of the little finger—an expressive if not graceful movement, the art of which is lost to modern times — he hastened out of the apartment, and gained the street at a bound by the force of indignation, and the door closed between him and the usurer's den. His indignation thus indulged in, however, he now began to ask himself what was to be his next step. “Not that my life's happiness would have depended upon obeying Ugolino's unreasonable orders,” he muttered to himself; “but now that he has forced his secret upon me, he has me in a manner in his clutches, and I must get out of them the best way I can, for there are men who never forgive you for their having taken you into their confidence unless they profit by it; and besides, though I looked at my rusty frock, he knows well that the purse he chucks me now and then, together with the liberty the good prior is obliged to grant me, makes my time hang less heavily than it used to do. But this villain usurer must be very sure of how scarce money is or he never would have let me go away; or



else — who knows,” he cried, as a new idea occurred to him. “Perhaps he really did guess who wants the money, and did not like the security, and who knows again but he was right. I must take care, and above all things not involve our prior in this affair ;—but where now to turn me—” and as he looked mechanically about, his eye was attracted by a man who seemed curiously observing him, and had the air of having been for some time engaged in that occupation. Their eyes no sooner met, than the man, whose red satin tunic, blue vest, and round black cap, would have then decided him a Jew, even if the peculiar features of that race had been less marked in him, saluted him respectfully, and in a low and confidential tone asked, if he could not have the honour of serving him in any way.

Once more we must appeal from modern enlightenment to ancient superstition, in order that the reader may be able, in some degree, to enter into the good friar’s feelings at this address.

The race abhorred, and tolerated only by one of the many melancholy inconsistencies of human nature—for the sake of the accommodation their wealth afforded generally to the vices of the age, —the sudden apparition of one of that race before

him, at that particular moment when his embarrassment was at a point from which one of them alone, perhaps, could have immediately relieved him; the man's evident divination of what he believed his secret wants and wishes; was it to be wondered at that the worthy friar, who, like many others, paid in superstition, instead of true and active piety, that tribute which all pay in some form or another to the instinct of another world which "stirs within us," instead of replying to the courteous demand, staggered some paces back, and, without any attempt at disguise, made the sign of the cross upon his breast.

The Hebrew understood and smiled at his alarm.

"I am not what you take me for," he said gently. "I am Barnaba, of whom you must have often heard; and, as I hope, not unfavourably;" and it was true that he, who so called himself, was respected as much as a Jew could then be respected for moderation, at least, in his accumulation of wealth at others' expense, if not for perfect uprightness in his dealings.

"But how—how—" stammered Bonafazio, reassured by the well-known name,—“how could you guess what I was thinking of?”

“My good Fra Bonafazio, nay, start not, for I also know you, not only by character, but by appearance: my good friar, when a man sees one like you going into that door,” pointing to the one which Bonafazio had just seen closed behind him, “we know it is not to shrive penitents; and it requires less skill than I pique myself upon in reading the human countenance, to learn by yours, on coming out, that your mission was not a successful one. Now, having tried the Coarsini and found them of no avail, what do you say to trying the poor Jew?”

“I say it would be out of the frying-pan into the fire,” replied Bonafazio; “and again I say, ‘Get thee behind me, Sathanas!’”

“As you please,” said the Jew meekly, too well accustomed to such civility, especially from those who were bound to set an example of charity and humility. “As you please, but remember there are oases in the desert, and that even the devil is not so black as he is painted.”

“He could not be painted too black, and that is a saying worthy of a Jew,” retorted the friar devotionally; but that salvo laid to his conscience, “who knows,” he said half to himself, “but he might do our business after all;” and as Barnaba,

perceiving the hesitation, waited with characteristic humility for his decision, Fra Bonafazio, after another glance, half serious, half insulting, at the poor man's yellow slippers, condescended to ask him where he lived, and whether it would really be safe for a Christian to trust his precious soul and body there.

"Others have trusted their bodies and have not been betrayed, and for the soul, that dependeth on the possessor," was the reply.

"A truce to your devil's logic," said the burly friar, "and lead the way to your den, but take the most private ways, and see that you never look behind to let the people know in whose company I walk ; I shall keep my eye upon you."

The Jew nodded in sign of acquiescence, and moved forwards, and Fra Bonafazio, having just recovered his mental equilibrium, was preparing to follow him with his most disengaged air, when a man passing him, and catching his eye, apparently without aim or design, threw up his hands and perpetrated the very movement which formed the friar's salutation of adieu to the Coarsini ; and in doing so, threw into his eyes an expression of such exquisite intelligence and drollery that, although he passed rapidly on his way and had in

a moment disappeared round the corner of a street, the friar felt his blood run cold in his veins, and his tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth, as he recognised in him, Sattarello, the Ghibeline spy, and knew that it must have been he who had been, by the usurer, thrust into some place where he had seen, if not heard, all that passed.

“I am betrayed!—I am discovered!—I am ruined!” exclaimed Fra Bonafazio; “yet, by whom?—the secret is yet between Ugolino and myself, I can swear to that, as far as I am concerned at least; and if he has blabbed to others it can never be traced to me,—and at all events my only hope is in being useful to him:” and seeing the Jew at that moment pause in the distance, as he perceived in turning a corner that Bonafazio was not following, the friar hastened towards him, and learned that they were already within ten paces of their destination.

In that apparently insignificant residence there was nothing worthy of particular description. Bonafazio followed his conductor up several flights of dark and narrow stairs, to a sort of turret, which the Jew called his bed-room, but which served the multifarious purposes of bed-

room, study, office, and bank. There he learned the particulars of Bonafazio's requirement ; and although he, of course, declared that there would be some difficulty in collecting the necessary sum in the particular form required, and in so short a time, he undertook to deliver it at an interest so moderate, that Bonafazio began to fear he should find the ducats turn into slate-stones, until the Jew added, that there was one indispensable condition to be annexed. The friar, whose teeth began to chatter, asked what it was: "A trifle," replied the other ; "but every one has his whim, "it is that your prior gives me under his hand, a declaration of having received this sum in deposit—in deposit, do you understand ?—from me, on condition of returning it to me, that is, the seven thousand, two hundred and sixty-one golden ducats ; for, as I told you, I never transgress the law—father Abraham forbid !—on the contrary, I go beyond it ; it allows twelve per cent., and I in my abundance add three-fourths more. So, as I was saying, your prior must give me a declaration under his hand of having received from me the sum of seven thousand, two hundred and sixty golden Venetian ducats, to be restored to me on my first asking it after the expiration of one year."

The reader may imagine Fra Bonafazio's sensations at this proposal—it seemed as if the world were in league against his prior. For some moments he remained silent, fearful of trusting a second time to his indignation; but as the Jew's patience was beyond proof, he was obliged at last to speak.

“But know you not—(base dog,” but this was muttered, and the Jew was not obliged to hear it)—“know you not that we have a vow of poverty?”

“That does not prevent receiving money in deposit; it is why I chose that form.”

“But the law does not recognise mendicants as under pecuniary liabilities.”

“And I do not mean to have recourse to the law.”

“Dog! what is it you then do mean?—Where are you going?—Why do you not answer me?”

“Pardon me, but I thought you called the dog, and although I do not keep him at the door to announce to every one that there is treasure in my house, as indeed in my case would be a false pretence, I have one in the next room, for my own private diversion;—Hydra, make yourself heard,” he said, and although the change in his voice was almost imperceptible to ordinary ears, he was answered by a burst from the deep throat of the

well-trained animal, which changed in a moment the nature of the Friar's apprehensions.

"Nay, fear nothing," the Jew said, as he perceived the cheek of his guest grow pale, "there is no further cause to fear;" and the friar was obliged to swallow the implied taunt as many another has done, by pretending not to understand it.

He rose, however, almost immediately, saying he would make known the conditions to his prior. • The Jew rose also, and without betraying any undue, or even undignified anxiety for the conclusion of the transaction, he said impressively,

"Make known my condition to the principal in this affair, and if you do not, I will. You have been faithful to your trust, and I shall say so; but those who have something to lose do not walk abroad with their eyes shut. Adieu for the present; you will return to me, I know—and remember this, my dog *never* answers but when he is called, but if he has not as many heads as his name would imply, he has many names, and, as he was reared by a Christian, many of them are abusive; it is therefore best not to call any such in his hearing—do you understand? For the rest, you shall not go without washing down your



alarm in a glass of Vernaccia," and so saying the Jew disappeared into the apartment whence had proceeded the voice of Hydra; and Fra Bonafazio, in the same moment, rushed to that by which they had entered in order to make his escape; but let the reader imagine his horror upon finding he could not open it—there was neither key nor handle, nor aught to indicate the possibility of opening it from within, except a small aperture, which, as he now observed, did not pass quite through the wood, so that at the other side all must be smooth and unbroken. His horror, however, was of short duration; for, in a few moments, the Jew returned, closing the door of the dreaded room behind him; and the friar remarked to himself that not even a breath had again betrayed the existence of the animal there. The Jew carried a small platter in one hand, on which were two glasses, and in the other one of those transparent flasks which suffered to shine through the clear and exquisite colour of the golden Vernaccia.

"Have you sent away the dog?" Fra Bonafazio could not prevent himself from asking, as much, let us hope, in curiosity as in alarm.

"No," replied the Jew, smiling; "but he knows his duty; he never speaks but when spoken to."

"But he does not even breathe ; he did not move when you opened the door."

"If he were in the habit of making noise himself he could not so readily catch the least sound which others make ; he asked me by signs intelligible between us, if he should resent your attempted escape, and I told him it was unnecessary."

"And why, pray, am I a prisoner ?"

"You are not a prisoner ; but is it courteous to steal away while your host goes to procure you refreshment ?—The moment you drink this wine you are free to go."

"*The moment I drink this wine ?*—I certainly shall not drink it then."

"You prefer keeping me company ?"

"No, but if I am to be lost, at least it shall not be by my own hand !"

"And what should I gain by finding you ?" asked the Jew dryly, and quietly replacing in the flask the wine he had poured into the glasses : "which do you suppose, the 1260 ducats which I am to make by your returning to your employer, or your company living, or carcase dead, would be of most use to me ? But, here—since you have some good reason for supposing poisoning to be a

common occurrence, take this wine away with you, tell your employer—ay, or your prior, where it came from, and see if they will fear to taste it.”

“In that, at least, there can be no harm,” Fra Bonafazio conceded, “and it certainly seems a proof that there can be no harm in it; if I were sure of that I might—”

“Not here—you shall not try it here,” the Jew interrupted, placing his hand upon the stopper; the first time your blood stopped at your heart through fear, or that your fasting fare disagreed with you for a twelvemonth to come, you would swear yourself poisoned by the Jew; and where is the Christian that would disbelieve you? Away! for your employer will be in haste to send you back to me,” and so saying, he drew from his breast pocket a small instrument of iron, which applying to the aperture in the door, the latter opened as by a spring, and he reconducted his guest in silence into the street.

The latter, whose bodily fear had tied his tongue while descending the many stairs, finding himself once more in light and safety, felt an agreeable reaction, and turning to the Jew, he said, by way of a graceful *amende* and recompense,

"I begin at last to think there may be some truth in what you said about the Devil not being so black as he is painted."

"You feel you are now out of Hydra's reach," replied the Jew with a sort of good-humoured scorn just twinkling in his eyes and quivering in his voice.

"No," said the other condescendingly, "I really did not mean exactly to call you so, but—"

"Listen for once with patience to a Jew's maxim, and repeat it to your prior before he comes or sends for me to receive the ducats—It ill-becomes professing Christians to punish those for whom their God asked pardon!"—and, before the good friar could analyse the meaning of his words, the Jew had closed the door between them.

## CHAPTER XIII.

FRA BONAFAZIO felt, without knowing why, that his undertaking had succeeded.

"There is something in that man, Jew though he be," he said to himself, "that makes one feel he knows what he is about. But now for me—whether I ought to tell the Count or the prior first, is the question. If I tell the Count first, and he falls upon our poor convent, and forces the prior to give the security, why even if it be as safe as a mine, the prior's fears will make him impose new quests upon us poor brothers, and the people will dread and hate us more than ever. If I tell the prior first, and he refuses, and the Count finds me out—Lord, Lord!—how much I once wished to have my finger in every pie, forgetting that it is only cooks who can do so without burning their fingers!—however—"

But circumstances decided for Bonafazio (as they have done for many another) that which he was

unable to decide for himself ; as he turned out of the last of what might be called the bye-streets, into that known as Lung' Arno, he perceived Ugolino, conspicuous by his lordly appearance, as by the greater or lesser crowd which always followed him, himself crossing the bridge nearest to the church called the Spina, and no sooner had he come within the orbit of that eye, whose glances shot around almost like those of Argus, than the Count, by a sign, imperceptible to others, and which instinct alone, it might be said, explained to the friar, intimated to him to keep himself within call. Ugolino took his way to the house of the Visconti to make inquiries in person for Bianca, who, having taken cold the evening of the procession, had been ever since confined to her bed, obliged to content herself with hearing that Ubaldino called every day regularly, and at the same early hour, to inquire for her health. Fra Bonafazio followed at a respectful distance, and while Ugolino waited for admittance, another sign was vouchsafed to him, that he also should enter the house. He did so, and, instead of passing upstairs, Ugolino, with a parent's privilege, opened a door, going into a room adjoining the hall of entrance, which finding empty, he entered,

and beckoning to Bonafazio to follow, he closed the door, and, without sitting down, abruptly inquired the result of his mission. As Fra Bonafazio followed through the streets, he had come to the decision to manage a little the answers he should give to the questions he anticipated; in order that at the worst he might take some little merit to himself with the prior for having endeavoured in some degree to spare him; but no sooner did he find himself alone with the Count, and hear the simple words,

“Well, what have you been able to do for me?” than he felt himself about as able to manage his answers as a mouse feels to escape when the fangs of the cat are buried in its sides. Without a moment’s hesitation, or a tittle of variation, he related all exactly as it had occurred, with the sole exception of the bottle of Vernaccia, which, having had time and composure to waken to a scrupulous sense of the duty of a faithful servant, he determined to taste before risking the precious lives of either his patron or his prior. The Count never once interrupted him until he had finished.

“Return to the Jew,” he then said, as the simplest thing in the world. “Return to him at

once, without a moment's delay—do you understand?—tell him that all shall be exactly as he wishes; the prior will give the declaration he requires; nay, answer not—I shall take care of that, and having sworn him to secresy, by whatever oath these dogs hold sacred, tell him you will go to-morrow, accompanied by the prior, to receive the ducats, wherever in the meantime we may decide upon. As for these Coarsini,” and his brow flushed darkly, “we shall find means to make them do by force what they have refused to courtesy—away!” Nor did he forget that vow when the fitting time came. On leaving his presence, the friar was once more tempted to give a hint to his prior; but, while he stood a moment irresolute outside the door, looking wistfully towards the street which led to his Convent, he nearly fell to the ground, as the voice of the Count, from an upper window, called out to know the cause of his delay. As few minutes more as were absolutely necessary found him again in the Jew's presence; where, all being happily arranged for the following day, he drank the best part of the bottle of Vernaccia, in earnest of their future good understanding, and they separated without aught more worthy of relating.



Ugolino, in the meantime, formed his plans rapidly, as he had lately from the force of necessity been obliged to do ; and, before leaving the house of his grandson, he announced that he should, three days after, set out for Florence, leaving Nino, as had been already decided on, and ratified by the Anziani, his deputy-Podestà ; while another Visconti of the same family, and one of those who had escaped with him from Meloria, was named deputy Capitano del Popolo, with only the proviso, which showed the impropriety of that nomination, that in case of any sudden, unforeseen occurrence of importance, he should consider himself obliged to have recourse and yield to the suggestions of a veteran, named Gastani, a tried Guelph, and one bound to Ugolino by ties of the deepest obligations.

As Count Ugolino, for reasons of his own, desired to have as few attendants on this occasion as it was possible for him to travel with, he decided upon taking with him only his son Gaddo, as he said, for society ; Fra Bonafazio, for the care of his soul ; an old serving-man, who had followed him in all his campaigns, named Torpé, for that of his body ; and two soldiers, for the safety of the whole party—a precaution necessary in times

when a robber, named Ghino di Tacco,\* not less notorious than our own Robin Hood, after having cut off the head of a judge on his own bench, because some years before he had pronounced sentence against the robber's father, or brother, according to others, and keeping all Tuscany in terror for many years, was bound over at last to keep the peace, not by paying but by receiving a rich priory, with the title of Cavaliere! It is but just to all parties, however, the giver as well as the receiver, to say, that Ghino, if resembling Robin Hood in his daring lawlessness and systematised depredations, did not fall short of him in his deeds of occasional generosity and chivalrous courtesy, especially to the fair, weak, or unresisting captive, while even his less defensible acts were mingled with so much frolic, which both the temper of the people and the credulity of the times rendered feasible, as caused him and his band, or rather his numerous and well-trained army, with 500 of which he sometimes traversed the country in open day, to be looked upon rather with fear than hatred, and suffered rather

\* Quivi era l' Aretin, che dalle braccia,  
Fiere di Ghin di Tacco ebbe la morte.

*Del Purgatorio, canto vi.*

as a necessary evil than seriously regarded as a pestilence to be exterminated. The robber's head quarters was the ancient castle of Soldanieri, the ruins of which are still to be seen. It was situated on one side of the high hill of Manmantile, of poetic association, at the base of which, but on the other side, ran the road leading from Pisa to Florence; and if this circumstance caused that vicinity to be little frequented by night by those who had much to lose, it is said, on the other hand, that many a merry prank was there played which caused in after recollection the cheek to glow and the lips to smile, even of those who, at the time, had been the unwilling, and perhaps terrified objects or participators in such. For the rest, Ghino did not meddle with politics—a truly selfish code was his. To have no party and no principles, in order to take from all and enjoy all; but, notwithstanding this, in times of such loose and ill-observed laws, it is not difficult to believe that both and all parties not unfrequently sought the aid and co-operation of one so influential, especially in the under-current of events; and it was very evident that, as it was by the Guelphic party that his father had been condemned and executed, so he was always more

ready to spare or aid a Ghibeline than a Guelph. Ugolino was perfectly aware of this ; but, besides that he had not yet publicly, as he flattered himself, betrayed his principles, he determined to take just so much precaution as might with prudence, as to hours, &c., protect him from an attack, while it should not be such as to excite suspicion. As one step towards this, while he publicly announced his departure for the third day following, he determined privately to set out a day sooner, but kept that determination a profound secret from every human being, except the Prior of the Dominicans, on whose fidelity he knew he could rely, not only on that point, but on that upon which its importance depended, namely, the giving the necessary security for the money. He had indeed the best of all possible holds over that worthy dignitary, namely, that of self-interest.

The Prior of St. Dominick's was one of those whose parents had fallen into the temptation not only of placing their son in a profession for which he had no vocation, but of leading the young man into temptation also, by pictures of wealth and influence which were all the reverse of the vows which he was to take ; without reflect-

ing, let us hope, that by so doing they were not only risking his immortal interests, but exposing the faith they professed, and which he was to preach, to all those charges of inconsistency, duplicity, and falsehood, heaped upon it by those who, in their ignorance, or malevolence, confound the doctrine of Christ with its earthly ministers, Oh! where, where, is the religion, or the sect, that will stand that test?

The Prior of St. Dominick's, then, was a politician, and a politician in times when public faith was difficult to preserve. He was not only a Guelph, but a bigoted Guelph, who mingled in his principles church and state; and who seemed to change more than one of the commandments into the words "Thou shalt not be Ghibeline"—Do similar changes seem strange in our days?—and, on the appointment of the Ghibeline archbishop, he drew upon himself a reprimand for the opposition he had offered.

Ruggieri never seemed to remember the offence, but the prior did, and while persuading himself, and being persuaded by Ugolino and others, that the Pope had only yielded to necessity and clamour in that appointment, he was not without receiving encouragement that, in

case of any event causing the removal of Ruggieri, he should himself be a much more acceptable substitute, not only to the court of Rome, but to the party now apparently becoming all-powerful at Pisa.

With this in view he left no means unresorted to for increasing his wealth as a means to increase his influence ; and, as he and Ugolino had been from the first in perfect confidence, while Fra Bonafazio served as their lacquey, he was thus enabled to render many services to the Capitano del Popolo, for which he was rewarded not only in being permitted a large range and latitude in his quests and exactions on the people, but in promises of a support in his ambitious schemes, which he believed, not so much through reliance on Ugolino's feelings towards himself, as because he knew exactly the sentiments he entertained towards Ruggieri, and that the one become supreme and temporal lord of Pisa, the other could not, or would not, continue its spiritual lord for one day.

The test to which Ugolino now put his principles would, however, have been a severe one, if, at the same time, he had not shown him, that the money was borrowed on the responsibility of

the Republic, authorised by himself and Nino Giudice, and explained to him that it was in reality to be the purchase-money of that step which they both so ardently desired.

“Your highness,” the prior said, half jocosely, “will leave with me this authorisation to pay the money for the good of the Republic which the Jew rejects?”

“Surely, surely,” replied Ugolino; “the worthy Jew prefers the signature of a Christian priest to that of the governors of the Republic, but we shall by that time be in a state to teach him the difference, eh?” and the prior twirled the paper carelessly round his finger until the Count was gone; when, placing it in his strong-box, he sat down to pen a letter to be forwarded that very evening to the Convent of Santa Maria Novella, at Florence, to give notice of the Count’s intended visit; in order that such preparations should be made to receive him in that magnificent establishment, as should do fitting honour to his place and power.

So much happily arranged, and nothing occurring in the course of the following day to occasion any change, or modification, in his intentions, he went in the evening to bid farewell to

the Archbishop, previous to setting out next morning upon what was then a journey of some importance, even had there not been involved in it interests of a nature as momentous as those in which it now originated.

He found the Archbishop, as he had always been of late, calm, courteous, and seemingly approving of all that was proposed ; but, at the same time, without that exaggeration in manner, or expression, which might have awakened a suspicion of his sincerity.

"Your mission is an important one," he said to Ugolino, "but you will succeed, and I trust with as little sacrifice to the Republic as may be."

"I *hope* to succeed," said Ugolino, wincing involuntarily from the cool certainty assumed by the Archbishop.

"You *will* succeed," the other repeated, even more decidedly than before. "Only be it, as I said, with the least possible sacrifice."

"May I ask, why your Eminence asserts so positively that I shall succeed ?" inquired Ugolino, in a hurried manner, and the blood rushing to his temples.

"I say it," replied the Archbishop, "on



that authority on which all our knowledge is founded—experience of the past. When did Count Ugolino fail in aught he undertook ?”

“Is that a sarcasm, Monsignore ? An insult to the vanquished ?”

“By no means ; good often comes from evil ; it is then no longer liable to sarcasm or insult.”

“*If* I should be so happy as to succeed—in aid of which I ask your prayers—may I not hope that on my return that union between our families will take place, which will render our private as our public interests one ?”

“I thought—to my sincere regret—that your amiable grand-daughter was indisposed.”

“A cold caught the day of the public funerals ; it is already nearly past away.”

“I rejoice from my soul to hear it ; and I answer you as I did when last we spoke on this subject, that if the young people are happy, I shall be so.”

“Ubalduino was most devoted, as I have heard, the very evening Bianca caught her cold.” The Archbishop bowed. “Good evening—good bye, then—pray for me,” said the Count, unwilling at that moment to press any subject on which the other seemed cool or prepossessed.

"I pray daily, almost hourly, for our unhappy country," was the reply.

"Unhappy! I would hope that epithet no longer befits her."

"We shall see. Good night! and may such success as I wish attend you," and they parted.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE last, the very last, act of Count Ugolino, before retiring to his chamber, was to summon Fra Bonafazio to his presence. He had previously ordered him to take up his quarters at his house that night, without assigning any reason for the order ; and then it was that he first informed him that he had changed the day fixed on for his departure to the following morning ; and, as bills of exchange, and all our convenient modes of conveying money from place to place were as yet unthought of, that he had decided, as the surest plan, to have the six thousand ducats sewed into one of the saddles (the journey of course was to be performed on horseback), and that on that saddle the friar was to ride, as being the individual of the party least likely, in case of meeting with the brigands, or other mishap, to be suspected of possessing money.

This was the first intimation Fra Bonifazio

had received that the money was to be conveyed to Florence, for the Count's mode of life did not tempt him to unnecessary communications, even with those whom he trusted most, and his face, at the announcement, might have served for a study not unworthy of the pencil of Teniers.

"Six thousand hard ducats in the saddle, my lord!" was his first rueful exclamation.

"Yes; what of that? You can manage to conceal them easily."

"To conceal them surely;—but, my lord—"

"But what?"

"I am not a seasoned horseman at the best of times, and—"

"What has that to do with the matter?"

"Whereabouts do you think they will fit in the saddle, my lord?"

"Dolt! you shall have a reward in kind if you succeed in conveying them safely."

"Hem!—a hair of the dog that bites me. But, my lord, might not Torpé, your own faithful old serving man, take a part of them?"

"Harkee, friar! I have told you once, that the secret of the money lies between you, the Jew, the prior, and myself;—the secret of its

destination between you and myself. And, if I find, no matter by what means, that this confidence transpires, I vow to you by all I value on earth, or in heaven, or fear in hell, that you have looked your last on Pisa ! ”

Fra Bonafazio wrung his hands, and fear alone prevented his asking the Count once more what had procured for him the fearful honour of this confidence. He was roused from his disconsolate reverie by the Count ordering him to descend to the stables, and to select from thence his own travelling saddle, and one which he had already given orders should be in readiness for the friar, and bring them up to the room where they now discoursed.

“Torpé will show them to you,” he added, “and you need give no explanation, as I told him I intended examining them this evening, in order to securing some state papers : see you make no blunders.”

The friar did not dare to disobey ; and having also procured, by the Count's further orders, the needful for securing the money from prying eyes, it only remained to guard against the suspicion that might be awakened by the unusual weight of the saddle. For this the Count provided by

charging the friar to take means that no one should touch it except himself.

“And will not that of itself excite suspicion?” he asked, catching at a last hope.

“No; for you shall have a horse that will dash out the brains of any one who attempts to saddle or unsaddle him!”

“Eh!” shouted the friar, now thrown off his guard,—“Hear me, my lord: this enterprise is above my poor capacity; indeed, my lord, it can never prosper in my hands—it began with a raging dog, and is to proceed with a lashing horse, and where it is to finish is more than I can tell; but indeed, my lord, for once you have made a mistake in the agent you have chosen—I am a poor friar, my lord, and not a hero, if I could but persuade your lordship to believe it!”

“Enough! I have already told you you have done and heard too much or too little.”

“But, my lord, what good will it do you to have my brains dashed out?”

“As we can think of no other means of ensuring that nobody but yourself shall touch the saddle, I am obliged to have recourse to that.”

“Oh, sooner than that, I will think of some plan as I go along, and I will promise in the

mean time, swear if you will, that no hands shall touch it but my own, if your lordship will let me ride that little, quiet, black cob that is called the frate."

"It was the one I had intended for you ; but you must swear to me upon the crucifix that you will let no one take the saddle off or put it on him but yourself."

The friar took the oath.

"And now," he added, somewhat reassured by the dissipation of the greater danger, "since it is to be thus, and the saddle ever in my own care, I think I will add this treasure, for safety, to all that it already contains ; it is a ring that the lady Bianca sent me by her waiting-maid, with orders to offer it for her at the shrine of Santa Maria Novella, for her intention."\* So saying, he drew from beneath his gown a ring remarkable for the size and beauty of the antique gem which constituted its value.

The Count took it from his hand to examine it.

"It was a wedding present to her mother," he muttered to himself, in a softened tone, as he

\* A usual mode of making what is called "an offering" to some saint, or to the Virgin, or causing a mass to be said when it is desired not to reveal the object of such.

gazed upon it ; “ I thought she loved to wear it of late for that association. I wonder with what object she now parts with it ! ”

But as it would have then been considered nothing less than sacrilege even to endeavour to dissuade her from such a dedication of the gem, much more to venture to intercept it, he returned it to the friar, approving his idea of securing it in the saddle, which accomplished, with the rest, he dismissed him for the night, and sought such repose as his thronging anxieties admitted of.

The following morning, the travelling party were betimes in their saddles ; and it would have made a horseman smile to see the precaution with which the friar adjusted himself in his ; nor perhaps would it have failed to excite suspicion, even amongst the attendants, who were collected to see their lord depart, had Ugolino not perceived it in time, and darted such a glance at him, as put to flight all minor apprehensions. Pressing his knees then to the hard sides of the saddle, with the self-abnegation of a martyr, he commended himself to all the saints, but, particularly to St. Antonio, and took his place in the rear of his patron, who moved forwards in com-



pany of his son. The first day's journey brought the travellers, without accident, to a convent of Franciscans, dedicated to San Romano; where, notwithstanding the dress of Bonafazio, which, at once declared him of the rival order, for in those days there existed rivalry where rivalry should not exist, Count Ugolino's name and fame ensured their receiving the hospitality they demanded for the night, with that degree of officious alacrity, which showed that the bestowers held themselves the obliged; and here, accordingly, Fra Bonafazio had occasion to make the first trial of his expedient for preventing the weight of his saddle being discovered. It was one on which, whatever other merits it might have, he could not found much claim to that of originality. The moment the lay-brother, into whose especial charge he and his horse had been given, had conducted him, at his request to the stable, and was proceeding to relieve the poor beast from his travelling accoutrements, "Take care!" Bonafazio cried, in a voice which caused Fra Ricardo to spring some paces backwards; "this horse will dash out the brains of any one who attempts to saddle or unsaddle him except myself!" The lay-brother showing no further

disposition to interfere, waited quietly, until Bonafazio had performed the task himself, when seeing him look ruefully round for a place of safety, in which to deposit the saddle, he again approached, offering to relieve him from its weight.

"What weight?" exclaimed the conscious friar. "The saddle is remarkably light! but this is a very particular horse, so I think I will just have him rubbed down and put the saddle on him again to make all sure."

"As you please," replied the lay-brother, whose sole attention at the moment was directed to making his escape as quickly as possible to the strangers' room, to hear the news that he supposed all the others were enjoying from the mouths of the servant and soldiers of the far-famed Count Ugolino; a treat which never having fallen in his way before, he judged, not unaptly, never might again. Applying himself, therefore, with the utmost diligence, to do the little which Bonafazio, in his nervousness, permitted, the latter was soon satisfied, and they were leaving the stable together, when, as a bright gleam of moonlight suddenly attracted their eyes to the aperture, that served to give the horses air by night and light by day, Fra

Bonafazio started back, and nearly uttered a shout of terror, on perceiving the aperture filled up by the face of Sattarello, while his hands which were inside, were again applied to his nose, in the same graceful manner, which he had exhibited to the friar on the occasion of his following Barnaba to his house.

"Is that the devil or Sattarello?" were the first words Bonafazio uttered, and in a tone of serious and anxious interrogation, as if previous to making up his mind what course to pursue. "It is Sattarello, the bear-dancer," replied the other, "who is on his way to Florence."

"What to do?"

"Nay, what he always does; to wheedle people out of their money, to be sure!"

The friar mused. "I fear I am bewitched," he muttered sadly; then aloud—"There is a good lock to this stable?"

"Yes, but we never use it."

"You will use it to-night, however. That man . . . ."

"What! Sattarello!—and, even if he was not known for an honest man, do you think he could make his bear ride your horse, or that your saddle would fit his bear?"

"I tell you my saddle is not to be touched, that is, no one can touch it; but I will speak to him myself.—Sattarello!" and he hurried out for the purpose.

In vain, however, they sought for Sattarello. He had apparently sunk into the ground. The friar looked penetratingly at the lay-brother.

"Why do you suppose it to be Sattarello?" he asked solemnly at last.

"Why do I suppose it to be Sattarello? Why, who does not know Sattarello? I know him as well as I know my right hand!"

"That may be; but you know appearances are not always to be trusted. When did he arrive here?"

"This evening, not an hour before yourself. He sleeps here to-night and goes forward to-morrow. But now that your horse is cared for, you must need refreshment for yourself; had you not better come into the house?"

Bonafazio cast another inquiring glance around; but, little believing that the figure he sought for was any longer visible to mortal eyes, he followed the friar into the refreshment room.

He found it impossible, however, to compose

himself: between his terror of losing the saddle and his unwillingness to draw suspicion upon it, by expressing too much anxiety, instead of the jovial boon companion he generally was, he seemed to have no eyes, ears, or senses, except to watch the opening of the door.

At length, taking an opportunity, he asked in a whisper of his friend the lay-brother, whether Sattarello would not sup with them.

"Yes," was the answer. "They had even had permission to see Bruin dance;" and Fra Riccardo disappeared as if to summon him.

He returned after some time, however, saying that Sattarello really had disappeared. "He cannot be far off, however," he added, "for the bear is here."

"And my saddle—I mean my horse?"

"All is as you left it, for I went even to the stable to look for him: have patience, he will certainly be here soon. Have you ever seen a bear dance?"

To this question Fra Bonafazio did not even vouchsafe an answer. He waited, as he was requested to do, but in vain. Sattarello appeared no more, and the day's exercise, and the prospect of that of the morrow, obliged him at last to

seek repose for his wearied limbs and exhausted spirits.

On rising the next morning, his first inquiry was for Sattarello : he had not returned, and the bear remained his hostage !

" Bear, indeed !" exclaimed Fra Bonafazio contemptuously at last ; " take my advice and sprinkle him with a few drops of holy water, and you will soon see if he does not follow his master !" and he hastened in trepidation to the stable.

There, however, all was safe—horse, saddle, ducats, as he felt cautiously with his hand. " Come !" he said, cheeringly, to himself, " I do believe the Jew's proverb about painted devils may be true ;" and he fell in with the travelling party in better spirits than the morning before.

Alas ! how fallacious are the presentiments of man ! at least when obscured by an attempt at combining them with reason. It was decided that the travellers should repose the second night at the convent of Santa Maria della Selva, occupied at that time by a confraternity of the Carmelites ; but the courtesy of the hosts they were leaving, was so elaborate and officious, that not all the Count's anxiety to arrive before

nightfall sufficed to enable him to escape until two hours later than the time he had intended setting out.

"We must ride the harder, my friends," he said, as at last they found themselves once more under weigh; "we must ride the harder, for the night air at this season is unhealthy;" and he cast a glance at Fra Bonafazio.

The glance was received with a suppressed groan, to which Ugolino replied significantly,—  
"Press your knees well into your saddle and you will feel less fatigue."

"It is my knees that ache, my lord," he replied, almost reproachfully; "but I will do my best, and when I can do no more, I will tell you."

For several hours the travellers proceeded without incident. The order they observed, in general, was the Count and his son in front, the two soldiers next, and the frate and the servant behind. For part of the first day, indeed, the Count had endeavoured to keep the frate near to his own person; but ever and anon the latter lagged behind, from a vague and unanalysed idea, that, by so doing, he should suffer less fatigue.

The soldiers, on the other hand, were glad of an excuse to press nearer to the post of honour, instead of seeming to be the servants of servants ; and the Count was not able to contend against the double current without manifesting more anxiety upon the subject than he deemed prudent ; especially as his son, who was not in the secret of the money, seemed infinitely to prefer the vicinity of the soldiers, of whom he occasionally asked information on the passing objects.

As evening closed in, however, and they approached the spot which led to the freebooter's chief resort, Ugolino turned his head, more than once, to ascertain that all was safe ; and, finally, decided upon ordering that the friar should ride up beside him, on pretence of having some directions to give ; when, on looking round for the purpose, however, he perceived that in the interval of less than five minutes, a turning of the road had intercepted him from their view ; but as they still heard the horses' feet following, and, as the serving-man, Torpé, was still in Bonafazio's company, and as Gaddo began to express surprise at his anxiety, he contented himself with moving on at a slower pace to enable the loiterers to come up.



They did not seem inclined to do so, however ; and though, now, within sight of the impatient signs made by the Count, and even within hearing of the soldiers' call, they seemed determined to continue to maintain exactly the same distance between them and their companions, by regulating their horses' paces exactly by theirs.

"Oh, do come on father!" exclaimed Gaddo impatiently. "If we quicken our trot they will do so, and if not, let them get what they will have earned from the freebooters, but it really is not well for us to loiter in this neighbourhood!"

This remark was not calculated to produce its intended effect ; but Ugolino, not being exempt from the law by which conscience makes cowards of us all, proceeded in silence some half mile or so further, keeping his ear, and occasionally his eye, still attentive to the following horsemen, when, another winding in the road rendering him fearful of again losing sight of them, he made a full and resolute stop ; showing his determination to wait for them to come up with him.

In a few minutes they did so ; but the reader must imagine his feelings when, instead of the

friar and his servant, he found himself in company with two persons, neither of whom he had ever beheld before ; and one of whom was wrapt in a cloak so closely resembling that of Fra Bonafazio, that in the distance it had hitherto sufficed to keep up the delusion in which he now perceived he had indulged.

“What may this mean, my masters?” were the first words suggested by his haughty and impatient spirit, as the men were forced to pause by finding their passage intercepted.

On hearing this strange, and not over courteous address, the men affected to ask of each other by look and gesture how they were to understand it, and one of them said,

“Methinks it is we who should ask what may mean this interruption to our free passage?—we would, with your leave, move on our way.”

The Count recollected himself ; and asked, if they had passed two men riding, a frate and a serving-man.

“Not riding,” was the reply, “for, the horse of one having fallen lame, two persons, of the description you mention, had alighted, and seemed examining the cause of the disaster.”

"Are they far behind?" asked the Count, breathing with difficulty.

The men affected to inquire of each other's looks.

"We have ridden smartly ; it may be half a mile distant."

Without another word exchanged with any one, Ugolino turned his horse's head ; and, jaded as the animal already was, he buried his large spurs into his side, and galloped back upon the road he had just passed. One of the soldiers followed close behind him, the other came on more slowly with Gaddo, who was in no small dudgeon at being thus compelled to wait for a friar and a servant, the two trades in the world which he, in his youthful arrogance, despised or affected to despise the most. The two horsemen, in the mean time, as if no way interested, went forward on their road. Ugolino proceeded forward without slackening his pace, or uttering one word, for upwards of a mile, casting as he did so, an anxious but fruitless glance on every side ; for, even if the shades of evening had not already begun to blend the objects around in one confused mass, the thick olive woods and vines with which the road was there, on each side, furnished,

would have rendered impossible the detection of any one who had sought for, or been forced into concealment. When convinced, beyond all self-delusion, that he had considerably passed the place where he had last spoken to, and been answered by the friar himself, he again came to a full stop.

"It is in vain," he said, with his usual decision, "they have fallen into the hands of the brigands, of whom these horsemen were two ;—gallop after them, my men, and a step of promotion for each if you hold them until I come up."

It was not often that any one of Ugolino's family presumed to give an opinion upon any order pronounced by him in the tone in which these words were now pronounced ; but, although his voice was steady, and his manner calm, it required little penetration to be able to perceive, that the steadiness was an effort, and that the calm was affected. Nothing gives more moral strength to the weaker than the momentary weakness of the stronger.

"You will only deprive us of that aid we may yet require, if not for the missing ones, at least for ourselves, my father, by sending these soldiers from us," said his son. "The two men moved on at a moderate pace for a few

minutes after leaving us ; but the noise of their horses' feet dashing the ground from beneath them immediately after, could have only escaped your ears by the noise of your own—they are many miles distant already, for their horses were fresh, if indeed they are not lying in ambush for us in some other place."

Ugolino felt he could not deny the truth of this reasoning: he seemed for a moment overwhelmed.

"Dear father, what is it after all?" pursued Gaddo, "a frate and a servant; two trades that will never fail while there are souls or bodies in the world."

"There may be the fewer of both for this loss, however," his father answered, gloomily.

"I will ride a little farther to see if there be any house to which they could have returned for help." He did so, but still without effect. Farmers' houses indeed there were to be seen, traced here and there high up on the hills, by the lights that now began to glimmer from them through the increasing darkness;—but that those they sought had left their horses on the road to climb up the steep, rugged, and narrow path-ways leading to such, was a supposition not for a moment

to be entertained ; and as the road was now perfectly solitary, few choosing to travel on it at that hour, Ugolino was at last compelled to see that the only thing that remained for him, was to make the best of his way to the Carmelite convent, and there inquire on what probability he might rest, so as to take measures for the recovery of his attendants.

About an hour's further riding brought the travellers within the convent gates ; and, late as it was, before consenting to alight, Ugolino entreated to see the prior, in the hope of obtaining such advice and succour as would at least give exercise to his ardent spirit, now withering within him, at being obliged to devour its own impotent indignation for that which he felt as a personal insult.

The prior, a venerable, gentle looking old man, obeyed his call ; but, when he heard all he had to tell, shaking his grey head slowly and muttering several times,

“ Come in—come in, my lord Count,” he said.  
“ Endeavour to compose yourself as best you may, to accept our humble cheer ; and as for what has happened, take an old man's advice, and leave matters to right themselves.”

The Count's bold blood rushed to his face.

"You forget, sir Prior, that you speak to the Count Ugolino della Gherardesca," he said; "and of an insult received."

"For the insult, my lord, as a religious man, though a most unworthy one, I can, you know, give but one advice; for the lives of your attendants, if you and they be prudent, they are in no danger; for their loss in the meantime, such poor services as I and my poor house can offer you—"

"By heavens, this is awful!" exclaimed the Count. "You can at least lend me men, arms, guides, to seek out traces of the marauders."

"A guide I might furnish you with, if you can tell him whither you wish to be conducted," the old man said quietly.

"Hark you, prior, I do not like your lukewarmness in this matter; and now I bethink me your near vicinity to this dangerous neighbourhood—"

But the prior prevented him from uttering the insult which the fury of his impatience had suggested, by saying with gentle emphasis—

"Enables me to be useful in sheltering many, who, being obliged to proceed farther, might come

to more mischief. Alight, sir Count ;”—for the Count, while keeping his saddle, felt as if he had not quite submitted to his misfortune.—“Alight, sir Count, and let us talk under cover, of what it may be possible to do ; you see my old temples are uncovered in the night breeze.”

Ugolino felt he should probably not have a better excuse for that which he began to see he must resolve to do ; and so, excusing himself as best he could, for having so long yielded to his indignation, he gave his horse to an attendant, and with Gaddo, followed the prior into the convent. Nor is it necessary minutely to detail the conversation that ensued ; suffice it to say, that deep as were the interests involved to the Count in the loss if not of the friar, at least of his precious saddle—interests upon which turned that for which he had laboured for a life time, yet such was the description given by the prior of the power, force, stratagems, and popularity of the freebooters of Soldanieri, into whose hands he doubted not that the frate and the servant had fallen, that Ugolino was compelled to be convinced—all against his will as assuredly it was—that, to attempt their recovery by any means then in his power would not only be



probably to endanger their lives, but to give publicity to his having concealed in the saddle of the friar, a sum of money, which in those days, and under the existing circumstances, could not fail to draw down upon himself such suspicions as would ensure his ruin in the worst and most irremediable of all forms. He inquired of the prior what he supposed they could mean by seizing upon the frate and the servant, and letting him and his son escape.

“Their reason for seizing upon those they have taken,” replied the prior, “you yourself ought to know best, sir Count, if indeed it be other than one of the mad pranks they sometimes play for no reason but to divert themselves ; but, as for seizing you, or, my lord, your son, if they have no reason to suppose you have any particular treasure with you at present, that would be to spoil their sport, for they meddle not with great political characters, in order not to draw party vengeance upon themselves ; and they meddle not with the high in power, in order to have their . . . . I was going to say protection, but that would be too much.”

“I should hope so, sir prior ! and they will find that they must respect the very dogs of the

powerful ! How is it that an armed force has not ere now surrounded their accursed castle and blown it to the devil ? ”

“ Because, for one reason, armed forces such as that would require, have too many other things to do in these times, and, for another, even should they succeed in a body, those who compose that body must never separate again, or submit to pay individual and unrelenting penance.”

When, as has probably happened to all of us in our turn, Ugolino felt himself at last compelled to adopt the decision against which he had spurned at first, namely, to let matters right themselves, he determined to pursue his way to Florence by the earliest dawn of the following morning, it being now more than ever necessary that he should arrive at Florence, and, if possible, conclude what may be called his own bargain, on the best terms that might now remain to him, ere the news should become public that the Pope was, at that very moment, occupied in completing a document commanding the Florentines to withdraw from the iniquitous league against Pisa, on pain of censure, if not of excommunication.

When, however, the moment of departure

came, and he looked upon his train, diminished by such a cause, he felt perhaps more painfully mortified and more thoroughly overreached than he had ever been in his life before. His cheek coloured with a mixture of shame and indignation, and turning to the good prior, who, early as it was, had accompanied him to the gate, he renewed his exhortations to him to spare neither money, time, nor fatigue, in causing every inquiry to be made after the missing ones that could, even by possibility, lead to discovery, assuring him that all should not only be thankfully repaid but amply recompensed.

Arrived at Florence, it required all that self-command which, when he deemed the motive sufficient, Ugolino was capable of practising, to conceal his chagrin from the officious prior of that convent which not many years before had been the scene of the great political meeting in which the Pope had insisted upon the mutually detesting leaders of the two great parties "kissing and making friends" like naughty children, to renew their quarrels, as it proved, with greater rancour the moment after. The prior was not ignorant that, though the Pope's order had not yet been officially announced, it was purposely whispered

about, and that the publication of it was only delayed until the completion of some necessary forms.

Aware of this papal order, and rejoicing in it, as in fact did all the Florentines whose party-feelings did not blind them to their own interests —(for on the peace with Pisa, they flattered themselves, would immediately follow the renewal of the permission for the merchandise of Florence to pass through the Porto Pisano, the loss of which was to them incalculable, but which the haughty Pisans persisted in refusing even with their dying breath)—the prior received Ugolino rather as the ambassador, or perhaps head of one nation come to sign the treaty of peace with another, than as one who had been sent by a deluded people with authority to make sacrifices, almost at his discretion, in order to purchase that peace. Ugolino immediately became aware of the prior's prepossessions; and one of the most difficult pieces of acting he ever had had to perform, was that of receiving with courtesy and grace congratulations upon what he considered as the ruin of his fortunes.

After a long night's repose in such a couch as might vie with modern luxury, whose light but

close silken net refused to yield before the sounding trumpets of those little beings mighty in their power over the patience of man, and when every other refreshment that it was possible to invent for the wearied great one had been offered and accepted, the prior proposed sending to announce his arrival to some of the most influential amongst the Florentine nobles, as Guido Cavalcanti,\* and others whose names bear now no interest for us, assuring Count Ugolino that he would find them even going beyond him in their desire for peace with Pisa.

“I am persuaded of it,” the Count indulged himself by answering, trusting to the prepossessions of his auditors not to detect the equivoque ;

\* Allor surse alla vista scoperchiata

Un' ombra . . . . .

D' intorno mi guardò, come talento

Avesse di veder s' altri era meco ;

Piangendo disse . . . . .

Mio figlio vo 'è ? e perchè non è teco ?

Ed io a lui . . . . .

Fiorsi cui Guido vostro ebbe a disdegno.

*Dell' Inferno, Canto x.*

but Gaddo who knew his father's manner, as it were, by the instinct of nature, perceived his little alacrity in availing himself of the prior's offer ; and, turning to the latter, said "The fact is, sir prior, you and I must act a little for my father for the moment, for, unaccountable as it is, he has not yet recovered the loss of two of the most worthless beings in the world ; a serving man and a friar !"

"Gaddo !" exclaimed his father, reprovingly, and glancing at the prior, and Gaddo became confused, as he saw the proud brow of the latter flush.

"Oh, pardon, pardon, father," he said ; "I really forgot—I . . . ."

"Of what order was the friar, my son ?" asked the prior, who felt the impossibility of quarrelling with Ugolino at that moment.

"Of the Dominicans."

"It is well, you are pardoned, my son," he pronounced, with great dignity ; "but another time be more exact in your specifications."

In the meantime Ugolino felt he must not longer defer making, at least, some show of setting about the public business on which he had come.

Not Guelphs alone, but the few Ghibelines

who were at that moment in power, in Florence, and who, even if doubting of Ugolino, wished to preserve Pisa from ruin, vied with each other in declaring their anxiety for peace ; and, perhaps, never before or since was a man more tortured by the irrepressible success of what he was obliged publicly to advocate, while secretly dreading as the ruin of his whole life and fortunes.

“Do me the honour to come and dine with us, to-morrow,” said the Ghibeline Cavalcanti, “and I shall endeavour to collect a few, who may, perhaps, convince the noble Count della Gherardesca, that in associating ‘the city of flowers’ with his noble Republic, the flowers will not be found all earth-born, nor the fruit that springs from them the apple of discord ; in the meantime, if you will accept of my company in a walk through the town, we may pass into that hall where our youth are instructed, in what they should be as men. So that you may judge of what principles are instilled into them by our famous Ser Brunetti Latini.\* You will there also, probably, see a

\* E chinando la mano alla sua faccia,

Risposi : Siete voi qui, ser Brunetto ?

E quegli : O figliuol mio, non ti dispiaccia

Se Brunetto Latini un poco teco

Ritorna indietro, e lascia andar la traccia.

young *protégé* of mine, whose fame, if I mistake not, will immortalize that of him who is now his master, who, having travelled much, and spent many years in Paris, gathering stores of information, is returned, like the bee, to convert it into sweet nourishment for his own hive.

Ugolino, who had no pretext for refusing, accepted the offer and the invitation, while turning in his mind every possible means by which he could disturb the harmony that all seemed in a conspiracy to force upon him, and than which, the harshest discord would have grated less painfully upon his nerves. After a short walk, they arrived at the school or lecture-room; which, with the simplicity of public manners then prevalent, was open to whoever chose to enter, even unannounced.

The master was speaking at the moment that Ugolino and Cavalcanti availed themselves of

Ed egli a me : se tu segui tua stella  
Non puoi fallire a glorioso porto :  
Se ben m' accorsi nella vita bella.  
E s' io non fossi sì per tempo morto,  
Veggendo il cielo a te così benigno,  
Dato t' avrei all' opera conforto.

*Inferno, canto xv.*



this privilege, and accordingly they took their places, noiselessly, at the lower end of the large room round which the listeners were seated, while the teacher spoke from a raised seat, the parent of the present professor's chair. His discourse was on the general education or cultivation of the human intellect.

"It may be compared," he went on, "in some measure to the earth, with the different soils and climates which are variously adapted for various productions, and it is as gross an error in the teacher to endeavour to force upon an intellect of one species the science or the study adapted for another, as it would be in the agriculturist to plant the olive where the mulberry-tree should grow, or the reverse. By labour, cost, and time in one case as in the other, both may succeed in producing a sickly or meagre harvest, but in nine cases out of ten, never sufficient to repay that cost, especially in the human intellect, which has no second spring. The first secret then of successful tuition and study is to know the mind that is to be instructed, and to follow Nature's dictates. And, oh ! how many are there who have gone in miserable mediocrity, or inanition to their graves, who would have shone on earth, and left valuable

discoveries to their posterity had this plan been followed ! But if the man whose intellect is in his eye, as the heaven-born painter—or, in his ear, as the musician—or, in that part of the brain denominated the creative or imaginative, as in the poet—if the first of these be compelled to cultivate the ear, the second the eye, the third to study that science which discards imagination and rejects every thing that does not admit of demonstration,—why, we might almost as rationally seek to convert one species of animal into another. We are not here treating of that desultory or ornamental, so-called education, which, intended for shining in society, requires a smattering of all. We are treating of genius, of that means given by God by which mankind is permitted to progress towards perfection—to regain it, we will hope—that gift partially bestowed and differently divided, in order to show that we are each but a part—a small atom of a great system—and that he who grasps at all is fit only for the ornamental part of the great machine, while he who confining himself to that assigned to him by the great Master of all, aids the whole : and at the same time he should remember that he is but a part and must work in harmony with the other

parts. Observing strictly this truth, the immense and unfounded difference that now exists in the estimation of particular geniuses or talents would soon cease. The boy who makes a more ingenious toy than another, if born of humble parents, is perhaps sent to tend the flocks, or dig the ground, or brought up as a soldier. He has no talent for any of these occupations—they are badly done—they produce meagre fruits—society cannot afford to pay him much—these occupations become stamped as vile. But let that boy be taken and instructed in the laws of mechanics, and he may become a second Archimedes; while he who is discovered making mimic batteries and defences may be the incipient conqueror of armies. Yes, every trade, every occupation may become a profession, and it would be difficult to say which is the most honourable, because difficult to say which is the most useful—the honour lies in him who carries his to the highest perfection.

“Agriculture, which is the child, though the disowned child of botany, too generally obliged to labour in ignorance, because not instructed by the parent, involves in itself all the principles of our being—our earthly being. The agriculturist then,

if fully instructed, would be the botanist, the chemist, the geologist, the naturalist. If we now despise him, it is for his ignorance of his profession, not for the profession—and not the individual, but the class; because ignorance of the noblest science is common to almost every one of its professors! How is this, my young friends? Whence does it proceed?—from not studying the tendencies of the intellect in the child, and from this negligence, so long permitted, a confusion has ensued that will require generations to unravel. The agriculturist has not now means to raise his profession to honour and estimation, either in his own person or that of his children; and those who might do so are not yet sufficiently enlightened to make what are called sacrifices for the general welfare. But the time will come—yes, it will, and must come, though it may be distant,—when this will be done. And it may possibly not be in our fruitful climates, where the bounty of Nature is a temptation to the inertness of man; it will probably come from some northern climate, where, while the chill temperature checks the genial flow of Nature, the Almighty Father lends the vigorous intellect, that compels art and science to her aid;

—and oh, proud will be the pre-eminence of that man who first stoops from his high place to vie with, in order to encourage, the agriculturist. I say from his high place, because when aught has fallen into disrepute by ignorance it must be re-elevated by those whose countenance confers consideration. But that time will come,—be it here or be it elsewhere; for, though I have said Nature's bounties tempt us to trust to them, temptations are sent in order to be resisted. Yes, it will come, because I know I speak the truth; and when one man feels and speaks the truth, it must be in our nature, and will break forth sooner or later through the mist of our false institutions, and consequent ignorance.

“But you see now, my young friends, to what points my arguments are tending. The world—the civilized world at least—is now in commotion, in such commotion as perhaps never has been known before,—we may say certainly never of so unnatural a kind. Church and State are at war;—spiritual and temporal interests are at war;—what then are we to expect? A kingdom divided against itself must fall; but which kingdom will it be? The Lord himself says,

'Heaven and earth may pass away, but my word shall not pass away.' Let us, then, bear that in mind. It is not the mitre—it is not the crown that makes the church or the kingdom;—it is the truth and the right; and that truth may exist at Lyons,\* or that right lie on the plains of Tagliacozzo. You see I speak for no party—I call on all to hear me. My doors are open; for I speak—according to my poor light—not for a party, but for mankind.† Yet neither do I shrink from, nor seek to conceal, my own private opinions.

“What is the truth, and what is the right, I have already expressed according to *my* views; ‡ but I seek not to make you partisans; on the contrary, my discourse has aimed at shewing you that comparatively few of you are probably in circumstances, or ever will be, to judge between the two great questions now shaking Europe—the civilized part of Europe—to her centre; the question between Church and State, or rather

\* The Pope had, some short time previously to this supposed discourse, fled to Lyons.

† Did Brunetto anticipatorily think it was *the* Pope, instead of “A. Pope,” who wrote this?

‡ Brunetto Latini was a Guelph.

of spiritual supremacy. I have endeavoured to shew you that taking part in a cause which you are incapable of comprehending in all its tremendous intricacies, is to lend your aid to confusion, and to retard the advance of truth.

“Some, doubtless, amongst those I address, are by nature destined, and will I trust, by education be fitted for that important task of aiding in governing his follow-men ; let such go into the Senate house, or the Council hall, and give forth the result of his genius and of his study—it *must* be listened to—it *must* have its effect—small, imperceptible perhaps ; but, as the dew which we do not see, fructifies the earth, so do the words of truth and wisdom sink into the soul with revivifying effect, although the seed may not bear fruit even for many generations ! Truth, my friends *is*, it cannot fail to *be*, because it is what *is*. We may banish, we may stifle it—we may change its individuality ; but it is, and must find its echo sooner or later in beings that are. Be not you, my young friends, amongst those who will stifle truth ; or, by mistaking your talents or your calling, contribute to the confusion and the destruction of your kind ; it

is time that we were something more than brutes—it is time that the cause of immortal beings were weighed and decided by something else than brute force, in which the wild beasts of the forest would prevail against us. Let reason, argument, reflection, become the weapons of rational beings ; and let them remember that when such are answered by brute force, they have gained the moral victory—their opponents have acknowledged themselves vanquished as men, by descending to the faculty of brutes. You must then defend yourselves—yes, as you would against the beasts of the forest, and for this God has prepared some of you for the battle. The talents of some lead to war, and they will be called upon to fight ; for it has been said,—‘It must needs be that evil will come ; but woe unto him by whom the evil cometh.’

“ There are also other noble causes for the exercise of your strength ; I have already named self-defence, be it in your persons, your interests, or your rights ; for were this abolished, sin and destruction would prevail in the world to such an extent, that it would become worse than hell, until the strongest should also die.

“ There is also the protection of those who



require it ; and there is that glorious privilege vouchsafed to Christians, for which so much blood has already been spilled—that of rescuing the Tomb of our blessed Redeemer” —and the lecturer and the lectured all uncovered and bowed their heads—“from the profanation of the infidel. Go there, all ye who are thirsting for war—spill there your superabundant blood—exercise there your animal energies—but, oh ! beware, how you raise your hands against each other ! He who first resorts to arms in a common cause, I mean here a cause in which all have an equal right to offer and to maintain opposite opinions, acknowledges that reason is against him.

“The many have the right in a common cause : it must be so, for we have no other rule given us to distinguish right from wrong in worldly government but the opinion of the many ; mind you, I mean of the *cultivated* many—of those who have brought genius and study to the cause. For why, oh ! why, are we to suppose that ignorance can judge of this, perhaps, the most intricate of all the sciences, and that in which the many are equally concerned, when in our most individual private sensations, we distrust ourselves, distrust our best and most devoted friend to call in the

strange surgeon, or physician, on whose word we submit to pain and mutilation? Why merely because we believe that he has studied the subject, and tells us a certain amount of suffering is necessary to avoid greater—that sole secret of contentment and philosophy on earth, and which Nature teaches to you on some points, but which other and false teachers, demagogues, or your own ignorant presumption, cause you to cast aside on others. All may have and give opinions on government, as on any other subject; all I ask is, that they be given with the same modesty by the ignorant, as they would be given on law or medicine by one who had not studied either. I select these two in preference to the more abstract sciences, because, as I said before, of these, as touching our individual interests, and rights, and sufferings, we might be pardoned for supposing we could judge; and yet we do not venture or wish to do so. Why?—simply because the penalty of our doing so is evident and imminent; and because, yet more ignorant on the subject of government, where millions are involved with us, we are blinder as to the consequences of our interference.

“Beware then, my young friends, of him who

calls you to arms, except to protect rights, in yourselves or others, attacked by arms ; remember, I say, attacked by arms. What they tell you of rights withheld, because others are interested in withholding them, you should always doubt ; for who are those ‘others,’ who, they tell you, are withholding those rights from you ? Are they the rich ? Is that a reason for robbing them ? You are not prepared, I presume, to discard the law of possession, however mysterious, not to say unjust, it may seem to you ; for you know it exists in nature, you feel it in your own bosoms. Riches, honours, enjoyments, are but comparative ; whichever, therefore, amongst you would level those possessions beneath his own, should be prepared, as a proof of his sincerity, first, to submit patiently—joyfully—to his being levelled to those beneath him. He who feels in himself repulsion against this (if he will not abide by the golden rule, to do unto others as he would be done by, nor yet by that great principle of government, to give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s,) should, at least, have some sympathetic feeling for his kind, remembering this one undoubted fact, that the more any one enjoys of the good things of this world, the more

unwilling he is to resign them ; and there is not a more cruel error than the vulgar one of supposing that a man in power, be he Pope or Emperor, or President, or what he may, is *only* a man like one of us. What is it, my friends, distinguishes us from the ultra-mountain boor, who lives and dies a sort of breathing machine ? Is it not that our ideas are enlarged by education ?—our sensations refined by habit ?—our sensibilities excited by refinement ? And though the ultra-mountain boor is a man like us, would it be just to say that we are nothing more ? It is also a common opinion, that the pain of dying is the same to all animals ; but I venture to question it much ; for, besides that I think, generally speaking, the more of strength and size, in short, the more even material resistance there is offered to death, the more painful is the struggle, I believe that by far the greater pain of death proceeds from our moral sensibilities, and the thousand undefinable, often unconscious links and associations between mind and body.\* The

\* There can be no doubt but that Brunetto had something of "second sight," though misty and confused as that faculty generally is, and which his honesty tempted him to try to give out.

more there are of these sensibilities, no matter of what nature, for they are far from being always desirable or even commendable, the greater is the suffering when they are attacked. Is it just, then, in attacking the high in power or influence, to set no weight on this? If the high and cultivated, and the low and ignorant man equally attacked your rights, and you wished to be just in your punishment, would you deem that end attained, by requiring a mulct of one hundred lire from each, the payment of which would be the inevitable ruin of the poor man and his family, and might make the rich man smile? On the contrary, would you think the end answered, by condemning both for ever to live on black bread and sour wine? To the poor man it might be a reward,—to the rich one, worse than death; yet both are men; but, one is more—or, if you will, they are different kinds of men, and yet, I have taken my example in the grossest and least refined part of their difference.

“Now my young friends, if what I have said is just, there is no part of my arguments which should not have its weight with you in what are called popular clamours—in the risings of the poor against the rich. Mind, I say their weight,

their due weight—no more, nor less. Do not adopt the false, cruel, and roguish principle, that in despoiling the rich you are *only* putting him on a level with the poor man. If he deserves, by crimes—either as a class or individual, deeper punishment, let it be inflicted to that amount; but let those who name a punishment understand its extent. Let those who deprive a man of his place and possessions, know what it involves—not alone in the person of the actual possessor, but in the persons of his heirs—till then considered his rightful heirs—who will one day ask their inheritance at the hands of those who have robbed them of it. These considerations are too apt to be overlooked in popular tumults, and such never can be successful while this is the case; for what has been wrongfully done will be wrongfully resented, and so on to the end of time, the classes ever at war against each other, for want of erecting a system upon Christian principles.

“Would you be rich? — ‘Thou shalt not steal!’ but cultivate your talents, I mean the talents you really possess, and you *must* be rich and honoured.

“Many fail. Yes, because they or their parents

have allowed some false and extraneous reason to lead them into the path of others, and they have been jostled aside, because not strong enough for what that path required.

“If it be too late for your parents to become rich, tell them to submit, for your sakes, to bear patiently the penalties of their parents’ errors or mistakes respecting them ; and as they would they had avoided those errors towards them, so let them avoid them towards you. Study your calling each of you ; help me to study it, and I will help you to pursue it steadily ; and you will then lecture, as I have done, against insurrections, and all that would obtain by force what is refused to reason—the reason of the cultivated many. Would you be of these ? Let such as have talents tending that way cultivate them ; the field is open to all ; but let them not suffer themselves to be blindly led to slaughter by the unprincipled. You are born in times of temptation ; but from collision comes light. Let us be on the alert to seize the mystic spark, and preserve it as carefully as did the vestal virgins. And now, adieu ! my blessing, as usual, accompanies you.”

And the audience arose, and silently bowed

to the lecturer, as each passed his chair. On withdrawing there remained in the hall only the lecturer, Ugolino, Cavalcanti, and one youth, who, nearly from Ugolino's first entrance had attracted and fixed his attention ; not alone by his somewhat remarkable appearance, but by the rapt attention and peculiar attitude in which he listened to every word uttered by Brunetto. He sat almost opposite to the chair, but instead of profiting by that position to keep his eyes upon the speaker, he never once raised them from the ground, or, rather, from his own shoes, as leaning against the wall behind him, with his legs stretched out to their utmost length, his hands stuck in a sort of girdle, which confined his scholar's frock, or gown, and his chin resting on his breast ; those who looked upon him felt that his being was absorbed in listening, although he gave no other sign of it than once or twice changing the foot that lay over the other, evidently in sign either of assent or dissent, but which, no one could have discovered.

He remained unmoved, in the same attitude, while his fellow students passed out of the hall, as if revolving in his mind what he had just heard. Then suddenly starting up, without



noticing the two visitors, who rose also, he approached the master with rapid strides, and, stopping in front of where Brunetto still sat, as if resting after his recent exertion,—

“Did you mean, master,” he said abruptly, “that a man must concentrate *all* his faculties on one sole pursuit?—for instance, that the poet never could be anything better or more useful?”

“No,” replied Brunetto, smiling expressively, “I did not mean that a poet could never be aught but a poet; I should, by so saying, have triply\* denounced myself. I said it would be a mistake to force the poetic mind to make mathematics its *object* instead of poetry, or *vice versa*; but as poetry is the beatification of all that does or might exist,—the drawing forth, as it were, of the gems of the creation from their dark caverns, and purifying them, as these gems are of many species, so poetry is capable of refining all.”

“Ay, now I am satisfied!—now I understand!—poetry, then, need not necessarily be condemned to sing merely of love and flowers; nor the poet to twine garlands? else it should be left to women and children.”

\* Brunetto Latini was syndic, notary, and teacher, besides being a poet.

Ugolino, who had stood still observing the motions and listening to the words of the young man, now turned to Cavalcanti, who, in his turn, had been observing Ugolino with smiling interest, waiting for the question he now asked, namely,—

“Who is that extraordinary youth?”—

And, pausing yet one moment, with pardonable pride, he replied impressively—“*That is Dante!*”\*

“Dante!” repeated Ugolino irrepressibly, and advanced with precipitation towards where he still stood, opposite to the Professor.

“Yes, this is my well-beloved pupil, Dante,” Brunetto hastened to say, without waiting to learn who was the new auditor brought by his friend, Guido Cavalcanti.

“And this is the Count Ugolino della Gherardesca,” said the latter, not without again experiencing a sensation of pride, although of a more worldly nature; nor was he disappointed in the effect of the words upon those whom he addressed: the Professor almost leapt from his chair, and

\* We use the now familiar name of “Dante,” on the principle we laid down in the preface, preferring the spirit to the letter.

offered to kiss the hand of the great man who had done him so much honour, which was, however, respectfully refused and the offer repaid with a profusion of compliments ; while the young poet, whose fame was already on the wing, gazed on the greatest politician of the day with those dark, poetic eyes, which, in their piercing but sombre expression, together with his crisp black hair and remarkably dark complexion, caused the well-known observations of the two simple-minded women of Bologna in after years, when the southern sun had also done its part, as, seeing him passing, one pointed him out to the other with a sort of supernatural awe, as he who described all about hell, to which the other, in perfect good faith, replied, " Ah ! one sees he has been there, and has not escaped himself without a little scorching."

When all due compliments had been exchanged on every side, Cavalcanti said,—

" And now, Brunetto, we will leave you to repose yourself on one condition, namely, that you will join us to-morrow at dinner, at my house, with this your illustrious pupil ?"

Dante smiled as Cavalcanti, somewhat emphatically pronounced the word " illustrious ;" but

it was that quiet smile of conscious genius, which could not feel either surprised or flattered by what seemed natural ; although gratified as by any other debt or duty graciously paid or performed.

## CHAPTER XV.

BUT, much as Ugolino had enjoyed the visit to the Lecture-room, especially as the sentiments he there heard would have corresponded perfectly with his own views and wishes at the time, had all gone well with him, it was far from sufficient to lighten the load of anxiety which weighed upon his heart ; while, should he fail in his object, as every circumstance seemed to render more and more probable, those sentiments must be reversed for him ; it became every moment more necessary for him to endeavour to strike out some medium plan which might be held, as it were, in abeyance, until he should be forced to give up his last lingering hope of the friar and his diplomatic saddle. Previous to leaving Pisa he had, at various times and by various means, made himself acquainted, not only with the residences, but, as far as might be at second hand, with the views and individual characters of each of the Priori,

the number of which at that time consisted of six. Amongst these he knew was a young man named Benincasa, who had been elected in consideration of his father's pecuniary misfortunes and dotage, and who having had just brains enough to embrace the profession of advocate as a means of—starvation, believed that by so calling himself he washed out the plebeian stain of his shop-keeping uncle, on whose bounty he subsisted. Count Ugolino determined that this was the man with whom to open his sounding negotiations; and accordingly, having dismissed his kind but importunate guide at the convent gate, he retired on the plea of fatigue.

Cavalcanti, who had not failed, through all Ugolino's efforts, to notice occasional signs of abstraction and anxiety, went on his way wondering how a man of his talents could continue to doubt that all would go well for the peace, but at the same time admiring the anxiety for his country which caused that doubt; and yet, Cavalcanti was not a poet only, but himself a man of talent; but—of *human* talent. When Ugolino had taken some refreshment, and the shades of evening allowed him to hope to pass through the streets, wrapped in his travelling cloak, without being

recognised, he sallied forth alone, and proceeding directly to the house of the young Elder, or Priore, and having requested a private interview, while declining to give his name, the young man felt so much flattered, that he followed the servant himself to the door, to beg of his mysterious pre-supposed client to walk in ; and, certainly, there was nothing in Count Ugolino's appearance to lessen the value of the request.

They proceeded up-stairs together in silence ; and if the young Elder had already begun to feel his pert self-complacency unaccountably oosing out at his fingers' ends, to make room for awe at the mere appearance of the stranger, he did not feel himself return to his pristine agreeable state when that awful stranger, after seating himself, and looking all round to ascertain that they were alone, announced himself for whom he really was ; on the contrary, Benincasa sprang from his chair, and would have sounded the tocsin had it been at hand, believing that the moment, so long desired, was now at hand for that *coup-de-main* by which he supposed that Fortune, who had hitherto coquetted with all his more studied efforts, intended to recompense him at last.

The tocsin was not at hand, however, and as

his object was not Ugolino's object, the latter soon stroked him into quiet and submission. The quotation of there being "something rotten in the state of Denmark" was not yet in vogue, and Ugolino was not a seer in literature like Brunetto, but in other very intelligible words he gave his host to understand that Florence was about to be sacrificed to the avarice of a handful of her aristocrats ; who, in obedience to the anticipated order of the Pope — we have said the present Priori, or Elders, were chiefly Ghibelines—were about to make peace with Pisa, utterly throwing overboard the mercantile interests, by making no stipulation for the re-admission of Florentine merchandise into the Porto Pisano.

The young advocate looked dismayed ; for, as Ugolino well knew, though himself soaring above the meanness of commerce, all his hopes of food, while waiting for Fortune's caprices in the *coup-de-main*, depended on his merchant uncle, who was also one of the Priori.

"Your lordship should speak of this to my—to some of the mercantile people," said the would-be irresponsible Priore.

"By no means," replied Ugolino. "I do not



choose to enlist private interests in public affairs. I speak solely on the broad principles of justice, not for Mr. This, or Mr. That. I am, myself, at this moment, giving a proof of my disinterestedness; for, if the Pisans knew that I gave a hint to the Florentine merchants to look to their interests, I should lose their confidence at once."

"But on what grounds are the Florentines about to break off from the league and make peace?"

"Upon those of obedience to the Pope."

"Pooh!—pardon me, my lord Count,—but what has the Pope to do with us? With *us*, I say, for your lordship knows all the aristocrats in Florence cannot make or mar a law without the consent of us, the representatives of the people—the Sovereign People."

"I know it—I know that those who represent the people are of a different race and nature from those who mingle with *their* rights, and wants, and wishes, consideration also for those of the other classes of society; and it is for that reason I am here this evening!"

"Bravo! bravo! Count Ugolino della Gherardesca! it is refreshing to hear such sentiments,

and from an aristocrat! I no longer wonder at your exalted position!"

"I am not an aristocrat, my friend; I hate the aristocracy; I would pull them down to the ground, strip them of all that belongs to them. Yes, if I had my will all should have justice! I mean the people should have justice—you understand me?"

"Yes, yes, my lord, I think I do—talents and the people!"

"Bravo! in your turn, sir!—talents and the people! But are they not synonymous?"

"Nay, I am not sure of that, my lord. If they are, I should have said cultivation of the talents, and the people!" and the young man glanced at a ring, for the engraving of a judge's ensign upon which he had paid the only fee he ever earned—we do not say gained. "Talents to guide the people, and then all would be perfection."

"You are right," said Ugolino, who, oppressed with business of another kind, had not indulged himself in such a treat for a long time,—“you are right, sir, and I thank you for the idea; but would it not be more tersely expressed thus, ‘the people cultivated?’”

“Hem, hem! what all, my Lord? Would

there not, then, be too many for the learned professions ? ”

“ But where would be the objection, my dear sir ?—as, of course, talents and cultivation must not be clogged with the aristocratic dross of rank and wealth, even though base-spirited interested men *might*, perhaps, ask what then is their utility if they are not to improve our condition here, nor be valued hereafter ? ”

“ N—n—o,” said the young man, again furtively glancing at his ring ; “ At least,” brightening up, “ they should not be hereditary.”

“ Are you married, sir ? ”

“ No, my lord Count, I am not ; but, why ? ”

“ Nay, merely interest, sir, if I may say so, in one whose sentiments are so profound and striking. It is curious to observe how experience—I mean selfish feelings—modify youthful purity of principle ! ”

“ As how, my lord ? ”

“ Oh, in many ways. How indifferent would fathers be in general to acquire wealth, fame, and name, if they were certain their sons were never to be the better for it ! Showing what wretched, grovelling, selfish beings we are ; and yet even God himself condescended to make use of these

passions when he promised and threatened the generations to come according to the deeds of the fathers. But the human race is so much advanced since those days, that it is time all such doctrines were expunged." And seeing, as he intended, that the worthy Elder being now out of his depth, began to have recourse to hideous contortions to conceal an attack of nervous yawning—"One error I must correct," he added, "and then I leave the matter in hands so skilful. You spoke of my exalted position; it is a popular, but false idea: my position is perilous—my power nominal; were it secured I need not have sought aid to-day to do that justice to the Florentine merchants, which is due to them. But, while I am conscious I have not that power, and that if this peace be signed without precaution, that I never shall have it, I cannot bear the odium of being supposed a party in so cruel, so unjustifiable a proceeding. I have now warned you, and I have done."

"Oh, stay, my lord Count!—stay one moment, and I shall send for my—I shall summon the Priori to hear you!"

"Excuse me, sir, our conversation is private! Count Ugolino della Gherardesca is unknown to

you—has said *nothing* to you—you understand? The man has spoken, but not the Governor of Pisa. Good evening!”

When Count Ugolino repaired alone next day to keep his engagement at the house of Cavalcanti—his son, young, gay, and light-hearted, having escaped from the convent, and taken up his residence in the house of a young friend, after his reprimand from the Prior—he was surprised at being shewn into a small private apartment, such as we should now call a study, instead of into the reception room of the magnificent palazzo, and, before he was seated, he perceived a change in Cavalcanti's manner from the joyous, sanguine politician of the day before. The latter did not, however, keep his guest long in suspense.

“I have taken the liberty of having you shewn in here, for a moment, my lord, because, as I flatter myself, we understand each other, I wish to inform you, without witnesses, that as there is no rose without its thorn, some are to be found even in this our flowery Florence,\* and, in

\* We humbly beg the reader to remember that Cavalcanti was a poet as well as a politician; and that the taste of the age was “flowery,” if not hyperbolical.

order not to prick our fingers, we must go a little more cautiously to work than I thought necessary yesterday. The Priori—the Priori, sir Count, are our thorns at present; they think but of their vile merchandise, and will not hear of breaking the oath that has been taken to be faithful to the league—”

“Unless they can profit by so doing,” interrupted the Count,

“Nay, but after all we must be just, my lord; these poor men—all of us, indeed, suffer more or less, directly or indirectly, by your port being closed against us.”

“It will be opened, rely upon it; but at this moment the Republic is in such a state of financial exhaustion that to open that port, the monopoly of which gives our merchants their only chance against yours in Africa and the East, the Pisans think would be so ruinous that I fear without such a tariff as would neutralise the concession, it would be almost better to let matters . . . However, do not misunderstand me: I am not speaking my own sentiments, but the contrary. I would throw the port open at once; but I know the Pisans will not, because they cannot agree to this at present. A little peace,

a little breathing time after this sad defeat from the Genoese, would enable them to listen to reason ; indeed I might almost pledge myself that they would."

"But you understand, Count, that without some equivalent for peace, some consideration for being spared from utter ruin . . . ."

"I fear the Pisans will plead the Pope's orders."

Cavalcanti coloured ; he was a man, whose laudable aim seemed to be, to cause the infidelity and vices of the father to be forgotten in the piety and virtues of the son ; and piety in those days was not often dissevered from allegiance to the Pope ; for when that rein was thrown off, the piety too often followed it. Cavalcanti felt at a loss, at that moment, to do his duty, both as a Papist and a Patriot, and Ugolino, being perfectly content with what he had heard, gladly consented to the proposal to adjourn politics for the moment, and give themselves up to the pleasures of the table, in its double, if gastronomics will not allow us to say, its best sense.

When they gained the saloon, the little party was assembled ; and, in its assortment, might

be discovered the honest pride and cultivated and patriotic spirit of the host. There was Brunetto Latini, with Dante still by his side, although the eyes of the latter were already fixed upon that lovely being, for whom the affection of childhood had lately warmed into the passion of manhood, and to whom, notwithstanding that he was at that time only twenty-two or twenty-three years of age, he was affianced, although her early death, soon rendered her literally, and, indeed,

“ Less his hope upon earth than his guide into heaven,”

while with that humility which ever attends true genius—by rendering it capable, at least, of conceiving even what it cannot attain to, he was still the humble and admiring pupil of him, whose Poem\* is only dragged forth from the lumber of long forgotten efforts, in order to decide the question, which in my humble opinion is clearly decided in the affirmative, as to whether or not it formed the foundation of the splendid fabric of his pupil. To Bice or Beatrice the words of Homer,—that she seemed not born of man, but of a god—were, even then, applied by her lover ; and yet, when one remembers that she was ever

\* “ Il Tesoretto ” di Brunetto Latini.



beside that father, Folco Portinari, of glorious and imperishable memory, though of humble origin, who has the merit of having founded the first hospital in Christendom, worthy of the name, and maintained it at his own expense; methinks, even with all her womanly beauty, we need not desire for her a higher origin! She was seated beside Donna Almeria, the lady of the house, and alternately met the eyes of her betrothed with modest pride and ingenuous affection, or turned them away unaffectedly abashed by the intensity of the poet's rapt gaze. There was Arnolfo, whom, though a man of silent and unsocial talents, Cavalcanti had invited as the chief architect of Florence at that time. There was Casella, already united in the strictest friendship with Dante, by that mysterious, but evidently divine, attraction which is so often seen to exist between souls as between bodies of opposite qualities or properties, each seeking in another that in which it is itself deficient, unconsciously thus yielding to that law of equalization in which, probably, consists perfection.

Dante, it is well known, was, like too many poets, of a melancholy temperament, or at least

he allowed himself to be so entirely carried away from earth and its realities that sometimes he could not return to them without disgust and depression ; and, in such moments, he was wont to fly to Casella, whose social, joyous, but pure and amiable character, found its channel in the half spiritual, half sensual, but ever refined and soothing talent of music. Casella's notes have not come down to us, but his music has, in the glowing words of Dante ;\* and, to use for the hundredth time that most convenient and most

- \* Io vidi una di lor trarresi avanti,  
 Per abbracciarmi, con sì grande affetto,  
 Che mosse me a far lo simigliante.  
 O ombre vane, fuor che nell' aspetto !  
 Tre volte dietro a lei le mani avvinsi,  
 E tante mi tornai con esse al petto.  
 Di maraviglia, credo, mi dipinsi ;  
 Perchè l' ombra sorrise, e sì ritrasse,  
 Ed io, seguendo lei, oltre mi pinsi.  
 Soavemente disse ch' io possasse,  
 Allor conobbi chi era, e pregai,  
 Che, per parlarmi, un poco s' arrestasse.  
 Risposemi : così, com io t' amai  
 Nel mortal corpo, così t' amo sciolta :  
 Però m' arresto : ma tu perchè vai ?  
 Casella mio, per tornare altra volta.  
 Là dove io son, fo io questo viaggio,  
 Diss' io ; ma a te come tant' ora e tolta ?

civil of all quotations,—“though last not least,”—there was Cimabue, the godfather, if we must not say the father, of painting, whose pictures, however inferior to those to which they have served at once as models and as beacons, excited such enthusiasm in their day that the uncovering of one, that still holds its place over the altar in the church of Santa Maria Novella, in Florence, was looked forward to and attended as a national fête, and which still excites what perhaps I may be allowed to call a species of philosophic admiration, showing at once what genius can do and what it cannot do without cultivation and ex-

. . . . .  
 Ed io : se nuova legge non ti toglie  
 Memoria o uso all' amoroso canto,  
 Che mi solea quietar tutte mie voglie,  
 Di ciò ti piaccia consolare alquanto  
 L' anima mia, che con la sua persona,  
 Venendo qui è affannata tanto.  
 Amor, che nella mente mi ragiona,  
 Cominciò egli allor sì dolcemente,  
 Che la dolcezza ancor dentro mi suona.  
 Lo mio Maestro, ed io, e quella gente,  
 Ch' eran con lui, parevan sì contenti,  
 Come a nessun toccasse altro la mente.  
 Noi andammo tutti fissi ea attenti  
 Alle sue note.

*Del Purgatorio, canto ii.*

perience—in other words, showing the tendency of man to infinite perfection.

Cavalcanti, in advancing to address to each of his guests individually that courteous form of reception which was then the custom, was somewhat surprised to perceive that Cimabue, who not less in right of his noble birth than of his splendid talents, had always moved in the first society, and who, just then fresh from the honour of a visit from Charles of Anjou, might have been forgiven a little triumph in presenting himself to his host, seemed, on the contrary, to hang back behind the others as long as was possible, with a degree of embarrassment which, however, was at last explained, when, from under a large ponderous piece of furniture, he succeeded in drawing forth a boy of about nine or ten years of age, evidently of the lowest class of society, and without any attempt to disguise the fact, either on the part of nature, by graceful or attractive lineaments, or on that of art, by cultivation or fine clothing. When explanation could no longer be deferred, the great painter, colouring with that painful consciousness which, on occasions, seize upon those whose originality of talent or of fancy having carried them beyond what

duller minds can appreciate or sympathise in, find themselves "in an awkward position," recovered himself, in the only way that remained to him, by taking from the hand of the child a piece of rude slate-stone and presenting it to Cavalcanti, with the words,—“ This, I trust, will plead my apology.”

The Donna Almeria, who was already in the secret, looked with hospitably gracious eyes at her husband, while he, naturally enough supposing any sketch presented thus by Cimabue must be his own, felt not a little startled as he gazed upon the spirited but rude attempt, which he felt called upon to praise, and, in his confusion, uttered the usual neutral question—“ What is this ?”

“ What is it !” repeated Cimabue, in a tone of mortification ; while the child, with the sensitive pride of innate genius unappreciated, turned aside to conceal the tears, which dried, however, as rapidly as they fell upon his burning cheek.

“ I see it is a sheep,” Cavalcanti hastened to say ; “ but—”

“ But you do not know its value,” interrupted the gracious Donna Almeria, and she took upon her to relate the well-known story—the well-

known fact, that Cimabue, wandering through some of those lovely fields which no one with a spark of pure nature still living within him, can fail to admire, observed a little boy, while herding his sheep, looking attentively at one of them, and tracing with a smaller stone upon a larger; approaching him through curiosity, he detected, and, with parental sympathy fostered that genius which, in a few short years after, threw his own into the shade;\* but which, such is the force of goodness, and particularly, perhaps, of expansive generosity, is rarely spoken of unaccompanied by this little anecdote; and, at such moments, perhaps, few would be able to decide whether they would prefer being Cimabue or Giotto in the estimation of posterity.

Dinner, which had been delayed a few minutes for the appearance of the master of the house, was now announced, and Donna Almeria, with the gracious courtesy which was her chief characteristic, called to her side the little Giotto; who, however, with somewhat of the air at once timid

\* Credette Cimabue nella pintura

Tener lo campo: ed ora ha Giotto il grido;

Sì che la fama di colui oscura.

*Del Purgatorio, canto xi.*

and determined, of one of his own flock and constant companions, stood still, as if he had not heard her address him.

"Leave him to me," half whispered the lovely Bice ; and, motioning to the others to pass on, she approached the child, who raising his speaking eyes to her sweet, smiling face, seemed to have found protection, for he suffered her to lead him to the dining-room.

"Why are you ashamed of us," she asked as they passed along, "and you are not ashamed to draw your pretty sheep in the open air?"

"Because," replied Alighieri, who accompanied her on the other side, "he feels that the eye of God will look on the talent he himself has given without noticing his peasant's jacket, while man in general cannot afford to do so!"

It is scarcely possible that the illiterate child could have clearly understood what the poet meant to convey, but some instinct half explained it to him, for he raised his eyes to his face also, and smiled so expressively that Dante—the nobly-born Dante, the already almost famous poet—beyond all compare, the poet of his language, recognising a kindred spirit in those speaking eyes, held out his hand to him as a silent acknow-

ledgment of such. The child, however, unaccustomed to demonstration, and, perhaps unwilling to withdraw his coarse, rough hand from the agreeably-delicate pressure of that of Bice, thrust hers forward with his own ; and as Dante, delightedly laughing, caught them both together in his, Cavalcanti, looking back, exclaimed,

“ Ah ! bravo ! bravo ! it should be ever thus, beauty and poetry fostering painting ! ”\*

Cimabue, who was walking by the side of his host, immediately behind Count Ugolino, who led the hostess, coloured slightly as he said,

“ You make painting second to poetry then ? ”

“ Why, it is, perhaps, a more mechanical—I would say, a more material art. One is of the senses, the other of the soul. Is it not so ? ”

“ Nay,” interposed Dante, whose surpassing genius betrayed itself already, in that noble profusion of praise of all others, which proceeds from the *unconscious consciousness* (if I may be forgiven the Irishism) of being above comparison, “ nay, and if it be so, God made the body before the soul.”

\* “ La pittura,” means the art in all its branches, and the word “ painting ” (with us) does not express it exactly.



"Yes, but the body was imperfect until the soul was given to it."

"And souls without bodies were not any longer enough for the creative Goodness, which made a new race on purpose to unite them."

"But you cannot compare the body to the soul, in value!"

"I cannot, compare men to angels, but speaking of mankind, neither can I separate the soul and the body, the value of each depends on the other."

"How! the value of the soul depends on the body?"

"Surely, on the use we make of its senses, and whether we address the eye by painting, or the ear by poesy, I think matters little; the only thing to be regretted is, that the noble conceptions of the painter require more time to embody, than do those of the poet."

"You will admit, however, that the soul is more precious in its immortality?"

"If we are not to believe in corporeal rewards or punishments hereafter."

"Bravo! bravo, young man!" exclaimed Cimabue, delighted with the defence of his art by a

disinterested champion, while Brunetto Latini whispered to Arnolfo,—

“I think we shall be able to make something of him in time; he has evidently been studying my ‘*Tesoretto*,’” and the master spoke thus, in something of the same spirit in which he said to Dante himself, when meeting him nell’ inferno,—

E s’ io non fossi per tempo morto  
Veggendo il ciel a te così benigno  
Dato t’ avrei all’ opera conforto.

While Bice, ever ready to soothe all differences, even of opinion, if it were possible, again offered her own hand, still holding that of Giotto, to Dante, and with simple modesty, colouring a little, and smiling, said,—

“Thus united, how can one be said to foster the other?”

“We shall for ever mutually foster and cherish each other,” cried Dante, with a sly and pardonable equivoque, and while pressing her hand, too much delighted with the emblem, to continue the discussion, he ended it by saying, “I will sing Giotto, and Giotto will paint me.”

The lines already quoted, however, and the strange, if not extravagant inferno painted by

Giotto at Padua, are the only attempts at the fulfilment of this promise, or prophecy, of which I am aware. Although, as is well known, the poet and the painter continued fast friends.

In the meantime, the company were motioned to their places at the dinner-table, and, the conversation soon took the turn that was supposed to be most interesting to Count Ugolino. It is scarcely necessary to say that the guests were all, though not of one party, even though Dante had not yet changed his, of one mind, on the subject of the desired accommodation between the Republics, and the Count was obliged, once more, to receive congratulations and assurances, upon the facility of accomplishing that which it was his present aim to prevent, which he could have ill supported, had it not been for the whisper Cavalcanti had given him just before. With that present to his mind, and internally smiling at the artist politicians,—when Dante excited somewhat beyond his usual youthful bearing, by what he considered, from the smiles of Bice, his success in the late discussion, called upon all to drink to the success of Count Ugolino's undertaking, and the union of the two Republics—he was able with very tolerable grace, to return

the compliment, adding that it was fortunate for his political character that no sacrifices were required by the noble Florentines for that union ; as at that moment he would have been beguiled into making any, now that he was more fully than ever aware of the value of such companionship ; and though he bowed first to his noble hostess, and then around, his penetrating eye fixed itself on Dante, and the young eagle received that glance unflinchingly. They were mutually attracted.

“You did not then give us credit for so much ?” asked the young man smiling.

“For much, but not for so much,” he replied. “To have imagined it, without having experienced it, would be almost to equal it.”

“And Count Ugolino’s talents . . . .”

“No,” interrupted the latter, “Count Ugolino’s utmost, but proud boast, is to be able to appreciate talents where he has the privilege of meeting them ; but it is not talents and genius only which dazzle the senses and captivate the fancy here ; the very word ‘union,’ is enlisted into the enchantment, and embodied in a form so entrancing, that no one can resist it,” and he glanced from Dante to his *fiancée*.

“And Count Ugolino does not call himself a poet!” exclaimed Dante.

“Alas! my young friend, a man cannot, perhaps, be a tragic actor for a life so long as mine, without feeling something of what put into words is called poetry; but, believe me, between such feelings and the poetry that only sings of them, there is all the difference that exists between the flowers strewn upon the bier, and all which that bier conceals! Fulfil what seems to be your happy destiny, young man; strew the flowers upon the bier, but raise not its lid!”

“Never!” exclaimed the youth, with the dawning of that indignant and haughty spirit, which some years after, when one of the two brothers, Scaligeri, at whose brilliant court, at Verona, he took refuge, mockingly asked him how it happened that buffoons and fools were generally better received than he was, caused him to reply, in presence of the whole court, by what we may translate into our homely proverb, “Birds of a feather,” &c. As yet, however, fame had not emboldened, nor misfortune embittered him: so he contented himself with exclaiming,—“Never will I strew a flower, or hurl a stone, until I have examined, and in myself experienced why

and on what I strew or hurl them ! And so may I live in posterity as I am true to this vow, were it on my father's bier."

All seemed to shrink momentarily from what—as the world was then, if not now, constituted—sounded somewhat like a denunciation, and which seems to have been severely fulfilled in his "Divina Commedia." There was one exception, however, to the shrinking, and Dante saw it.

"Yes !" he exclaimed, turning to Bice, and forgetting all else in the enthusiasm of the poet's far-piercing eye ; "*you* have no reason to start or shrink from the promise ! not even when I add, that if I am spared a few years, I will say of you such things as have never yet been said of woman !" \* And again we appeal to posterity as to how that promise has been kept. In the meantime the individuality of it, while adding force to what had already seemed as not over gracious to those whose consciences were not too clear, gave Donna Almeria an excuse for coming to the rescue by saying,—

"Why add if you live longer ? We are not ignorant that you have already fulfilled that

\* It is doubtful whether we have not anticipated the period of Dante's uttering this promise.

promise by anticipation ; and if it were not too much, as your friend, and our friend, Casella is here—”

“Oh, never too much to sing of *her*, and to—obey Madonna Almeria !” was the gracious reply ; and as Casella’s violin was never forgotten when he was invited to the houses of friends, it was called for while the guests returned to the saloon, and—

Tanto gentile e tanto onesta pare  
La Donna mia, quando ella altrui saluta,  
Che ogni lingua divien tremando muta ;  
E gli occhi non l’ ardiscon di guardare.  
Ella sen va, sentendosi laudare,  
Umilmente d’ onesta vestuta ;  
E par che sia una cosa venuta  
Di cielo in terra a miracol mostrare  
Mirasi sì piacente a chi la mira ;  
Che dà per gli occhi una dolcezza al core,  
Che intender non la può chi non la prova.  
E par che dalle sue labbia se mova  
Uno spirto soave pien d’ amore,  
Che va dicendo all’ anima sospira.

## CHAPTER. XVI.

THE following day the Count kept his room pleading indisposition, and refused to see any one, in order to give a last chance for the return of the missing friar, ere concentrating the force of his brains upon some plan no longer of success, but of escape from the ruin which would be the consequence of Pisa receiving any support that would render her independent of him, or teach her to open her eyes upon his treachery. Late in the evening, however, this order was rescinded in favour of the young (Elder) advocate, who, requesting permission to wait upon him was shown in.

The Count affected surprise at seeing him, and went, as far as civility would admit, towards saying had he understood who it was, he would not not have admitted him. The young man stood aghast for a moment; and then seemed about to take his departure.



"No, no," Ugolino said, in a tone of condescending, unwilling, concession; "since you have taken the trouble to make me out, I am satisfied you have good reason for it."

"Make out the noble Conte della Gherardesca!" repeated the young man, unaffectedly; "as if all Florence had not their eyes upon Santa Maria della Novella at this moment!"

"And how does she bear their gaze?" Ugolino asked, judging to a nicety how far the young man would be puzzled by the question.

"*She!* my lord? I meant your highness."

"What! by the Madonna? and the Count laughed, himself, at the comparison, while the Elder glanced towards the door.

"Come, come," resumed the Count, "what is it you *do* mean?"

"I mean, my lord, that we are living in strange times."

"Every one always is," said the Count, dryly.

The young man thought the times stranger than ever, and he looked imploringly at the Count to help him to explain himself.

"Come," said the Count once more, "all your Priori have told you not to listen to me."

The young Elder looked down, and changed

colour like a girl who has, for the first time, heard that her young companion has been called a *flirt*, if such a word still exists in polite English society.

"They have told you," resumed the Count, "that though what I have said be very true, that I am such a schemer that truth becomes falsehood the moment it proceeds from *my* lips."

Had Ugolino said, from the moment it entered into his brain, it would scarcely have been hyperbolic, so skilled was he in converting public into private wrong.

"They have told you that I am not capable of giving disinterested advice ; and that, even if it be as I have said, I must have my own reasons for saying so."

The young man gasped with awe at the Count's powers of divination, and inwardly prayed that he might not go on to repeat what they, and especially his uncle, had said about his having betrayed his country twice, and being now striving to betray her a third time ; but Ugolino saw his trepidation and had pity on him.

"Listen to me," he said ; "forget that you have ever seen me—do you understand me ? but tell your uncle, that for your future guidance in this world he ought to explain one problem to

you—Do you know what a problem means?—nay, no offence. I am a rude unlettered soldier, and feared I had used an inappropriate term. Well, then, never mind the problem, but just ask him to explain to you this,—What harm could come to their commerce, even if I should have a motive for wishing it to prosper? Do you think you understand me? I mean do you think you can repeat exactly what I have said? It is well, just so — *What harm it would do to their commerce even if Count Ugolino should benefit by it?*—Good night now, and good-bye, for everything has prospered so well for the peace that Ser Brunetto Latini is occupied in drawing up a sketch of it, and I imagine that the Priori, themselves, will scarcely be able to resist the Pope backed by every influential man in Florence.”

“And the Porto Pisano?” gasped the aristocratic advocate.

“Oh! it will be cared for—your colleagues have taken care of that; it will be *inserted* in the treaty, there is little difficulty in *that*.”

“Inserted, sir! but—”

“And will be observed until there be some fresh cause of quarrel,” said the Count, in a voice

which terrified his auditor much more than if he had said, "will *not* be observed at all."

"But, my lord Count—you—pardon me—you are governor."

"For the moment, sir ; but to be succeeded by one who is most earnest, and most interested, in preventing the port being opened. Good night, excuse me, but I really am fatigued ;" and the young man departed, pale with alarm ; and telling himself he must begin to work at his profession, as if his want of success had been owing to his want of application.

Early the next morning the Count announced the continuation of his indisposition, and when at a late hour he was informed that two of the Priori had come to wait upon him, he refused to see them, as he did when they returned in the evening with the advocate as their cicerone. On the morning of the fourth he announced his convalescence ; and, about noon, sallied forth alone, upon business which, although he had not spoken of it to any one, it was easy to perceive was not of a very exhilarating nature : no intelligence had been received of the friar or the serving-man, and he had by this time given up all hopes of them, and decided that he must

tack about and endeavour with the elasticity of unprincipled talent, to make for the first land that might promise shelter. As he was plodding his way along the Piazza della Santa Trinità, he perceived a number of people gathered round some object, which, by them, was concealed from his view ; but which, as he drew near, he perceived to be the well-known Bisiccio and Sattarello, by the latter of whom, and almost by the former, so well was his person known, he was respectfully saluted ; and, before he had moved many paces farther, his eyes were greeted by a part, at least, of that sight which he most coveted, at that moment, upon earth—Fra Bonafazio, but on foot, who made a full stop before him. It required all his self-command not to betray to the lookers on, his interest in this meeting, but it was sufficient, as usual, for the purpose.

“How are your knees?” were the first words which he uttered, in a tone, which conveyed no hidden meaning, except to the frate, who answered with similar precaution, “They are not worse, my lord. I was a little frightened, but without reason ; all is well.”

“Where is Torpé?”

“He will be here, this evening ; but he is not

as strong as I am, and he knocked up on the way—oh !”

“Away ! to the Convent di Santa Maria Novella, pass into my apartments,—see you hold converse with no one. I shall join you presently !”

And the moment Fra Bonafazio moved away, the Count retraced a part of the streets he had just traversed, and arriving at the house of the Benincasa, he summoned a servant, to whom he gave orders to say to his master, that the “Count della Gherardesca was much obliged for kind inquiries ; regretted to have lost the pleasure of seeing him, and was now convalescent.” The servant said his master was at home, and invited him to walk in. The Count declined, and arrived at his convent, in what would have appeared an inconceivably short time, to any one but Bonafazio ; he passed on at once to his sleeping room, and signing to Bonafazio to follow, he examined every nook where it was possible any one might be concealed, and when satisfied that they were alone, he asked the friar, in a voice of solemnity, if the money was *all* safe.

“All, my lord, every ducat,” was the answer, “and not the money only, but the ring, and a blessed ring it has been to us—but, oh ! my lord.”

"Not a word more!" The friar sprang back in dismay. "Not tell you all that has befallen us—and all that I have—"

"Not a syllable, until you have executed another commission—you shall then tell all. Fool! do you not think I am interested to hear it?"

"It seems not, my lord."

"Do not then trust to seeming, where *I* am concerned. Here is money; go out, this moment, and purchase for me, six flasks of the best golden Vernaccia—do you hear me?"

"Surely, my lord; but, the prior here—is he then—"

"Silence! do my orders—and quickly, that you may escape Torpé—do you understand me?" This time the friar hesitated to say he did, while wondering in himself if he was to be rewarded by a private drinking bout with his patron.

"I hope not," he said to himself; "for such an honour could only be intended to stand instead of all other payment."

"Take care that no human being suspect whether you are bringing them," continued the Count; "and as you cannot carry them at once, you must make different journeys for them; see that you execute this dexterously, and your

reward—I swear it to you—shall be as bright as the Vernaccia you bring me.”

The friar, kissing his patron’s hand in great delight at this then munificent promise, was about to disappear, when he turned to say,

“If Torpé arrives, my lord, while I am out, don’t let him tell you the story ; for, indeed, he is not capable, through fright.”

“Torpé afraid ! that would be the most wonderful part of any story—away !”

“Oh, my lord, years—in some persons—ahem !—make great changes. I assure you if it had not been for me—”

“Friar ! do not oblige me to repeat—away !”

As we were not included in the frate’s prohibition, however, we shall, without fear of his offended spirit coming to visit us, avail ourselves of his absence to make the reader understand the circumstances of his capture.

It must not be forgotten that Sattarello had detected the friar in the den of the Coarsini, whither the former had gone in a leisure moment, in the hope of picking up, in that general receptacle, some present for Adelaida, which might please her fancy without ruinous expenditure.



It is not to be supposed that one of his profession and natural and acquired acuteness could see a brother of the rich and influential convent of St. Dominick emerge from the inner recesses, where only those who came to treat of borrowing or repaying money were permitted to enter, without feeling that it was his duty to inquire into the reason. The convent was known to lend, not to borrow money ; but then Fra Bonafazio was known to be an amphibious member. Nor did Sattarello find this part of his duty very difficult. A few soft words thrown upon the wrath of the usurer soon let him into the secret of all that had passed ; and as he lost not mental, and scarcely corporal sight of the friar until the loan with Barnaba was completed, when he hurried with the news to his patron, it was not very difficult for the Ghibeline chiefs, on laying their heads together, to guess that this large sum of money was intended to enter in some way into the negotiation at Florence ; and although Sattarello's information did not extend to the security given by the Count, his enemies felt themselves justified in believing that the Republic was about to be once more betrayed. As to impeach him, however, in the present spring-tide of his popu-

larity, without being able to bring proof of what they suspected, would have been to ruin their own hopes for ever, after many anxious debates they came to the decision to strain every nerve, not to say every principle, to find the clue to this mystery in the first instance ; and, as they well knew that so wily a chief as Ugolino was not likely to have laid his plans so loosely as to suffer them to be discovered, it followed that, if permitted to arrive with the treasure in Florence exactly when and how he had projected, there was very little probability that its real destination would ever come to light. Arguing from these premises, and persuading themselves it was but a stratagem of war, they ordered Sattarello to proceed with his bear, which always served as a passport or safe conduct, to the castle of Soldanieri, and there give notice that Count Ugolino della Gherardesca was to pass on such a day with such a sum of money, supposed to be for treasonable purposes, adding, as a sort of salvo to the conscience, that if it should turn out that they were mistaken in this, they trusted to Ghino's honour to restore the money, as he had been known to do on other occasions of misapprehension ; while, by his de-

taining it for a short time, the truth would be brought to light, and Count Ugolino's character cleared, if it admitted of clearing. This done, it was arranged that Sattarello was to continue the journey to Florence, and hang about Ugolino until he should be able to sift out the whole affair.

Sattarello listened in profound silence, while these directions were reiterated to him by nearly each of the Ghibeline chiefs assembled on the occasion. When the last had finished, however, and they waited for his usually willing and gay acceptance of a task, whatever it might be, they became struck with his continued silence ; as, with his eyes on the ground, he stood scratching his head very much as an Irishman might do.

"What is the matter, Sattarello ?" one of them asked at last. "Are you sick ; or, are you, too, going to fall off from the good cause ?"

"No, my masters, neither one nor the other," he replied at last ; "all I want to be sure of is, if it be the good cause ?"

"What !—What !—What !" they all exclaimed and nearly together. "You are turned Guelph, then ?"

"Faith, I shall begin to think I am if I turn robber," was the reply.

“How, robber!—which of *us* do you dare to suppose capable of instructing you to turn robber? Is it to be a robber to prevent the betrayer of his country from receiving the means to betray her again?”

“Why, it seems not; but still, I don’t see, if the money is his own, what right I have to get him robbed.”

“The money his own!” they retorted ironically “and since when have you had so good an opinion of the traitor Count as to suppose that he would sacrifice so large a sum of his own money to the public good? And as for that lordly prior, we all know that he works with Ugolino for no other purpose than to put Pisa under the Papal foot, that a Cardinal’s hat may fall upon his own head!”

“I believe it all—I believe it all—but I have done many a job as a single man, that as a married man I would as soon I had not done; and to say the truth, I don’t care to add to the list the dirtiest job of all.”

“Are you then married, Sattarello?”

“As good as married.”

“And since when? This, indeed, may render you a less efficient messenger.”

“Yes, for she is a good and pious girl. But

I did not say I was married as yet, only I should like to begin to prepare myself."

The chiefs looked upon each other in ludicrous dismay ; Sattarello had been for many years their faithful Mercury, and it was impossible to hope ever to replace him, much less to do so at a moment's notice, and the case admitted of no longer delay. After consulting for some time amongst themselves, they at last hit upon an expedient which they supposed must succeed in removing all his objections and difficulties of conscience ; it was that an agreement should be entered into and signed, as best might be, by each of the chiefs, there assembled, to hold himself responsible for so much of the six thousand ducats, as fell to his proportion, dividing the responsibility equally between them, to be repaid to Count Ugolino on the condition that, within one month, it should not be proved to Sattarello's own satisfaction, that the money the Count had procured was for treasonable purposes.

A paper to this effect being drawn up and delivered to Sattarello, with information as to its contents, he turned it over and over, and upside down several times, as if it were by manipulation that he might hope to extract from it the solution

of the moral difficulty he still experienced without being able exactly to express it ?”

“Are you not satisfied even yet, Sattarello ?” inquired Lancia, with ill-suppressed impatience.

“Oh, I am—I suppose I am,” he said, with a sigh ; “for if this paper be good in no other way, it would bring all to shame for being of Ghino’s band.”

The chiefs who had long accorded a licence to Sattarello’s humour, in consideration of his faithful services, did not now feel themselves in a position to take it in dudgeon, and accordingly, without pretending to notice this sally, one of them hastened to say,

“I hope it is not necessary to remind you of your oath of secrecy from every human being ?”

“No,” he replied. “But if I live to return I shall marry the same day.”

“Why ?”

“Because you will then entrust me with no more of your secrets ; as it is, I will not forget that there is honour among thieves.”

“You know the Count is personally safe, for Ghino wars not with politics, but with purses.”

“I shall take good care of that at least,” replied Sattarello, stoutly ; for if he carries the

money himself, I will stick by him and see fair play done, if he were ten Guelphs, instead of half a one." And with this resolution, silencing the last whisper of his yet uneducated conscience, he withdrew to collect what further intelligence he could respecting the Count's resting places on the road, to bid adieu to Adelaida, and to prepare Bisiccio for his journey. It was no difficult matter for Sattarello to learn the Count's travelling arrangements, as far as they were known to others, but his ignorance of the change as to the day of his setting out so far deranged the calculations he founded thereupon, as to oblige him to lose a night's rest at the convent, and the society of his usual travelling companion, in order to arrive in time with a flag-of-truce at the bandit's castle, and there give the needful notice of the arrival of the travellers ; however, matters went better with him, as we have seen, at the first night's halting place, than he had ventured to hope ; for he discovered not only the person who carried the money, but the mode in which it was carried ; and the discovery not only satisfied his last lingering scruple, but converted the duty he had reluctantly undertaken into diversion. Sattarello was not, as we have seen, without some vague

notions of right and wrong, however desultorily picked up and loosely put together ; and, while knowing that the person of the friar would be respected more than that of any other by the freebooters, he decided with himself that a little castigation in the shape of alarm might have a salutary effect in teaching him to meddle less for the future in matters little becoming his sacred calling.

In the meantime he arrived without difficulty at the Castle of Soldanieri, and found that Ghino himself was absent, which did not displease him, as he felt he should be better able to manage with the inferior officers of the gang, should any management be found necessary. He gave his information then, and the plan was laid accordingly. It was easy to calculate that the riders could not arrive at their next night's destination, the convent of Carmelites, until towards evening, and it was a positive certainty that Ugolino would precede the friar in the travelling party, on account of his rank and not to awaken suspicion by departing from what it required. The only doubt that existed was, whether the soldiers or the friar would form the second line immediately next to the Count ; but even here



acuteness and the habit of observation came to their aid, and enabled them to form their calculations with tolerable accuracy, allowing a good deal as they did for chance, which on this occasion favoured them. The plan, then, was laid on the supposition that the friar would be the hindmost of the party, and was as follows :—

The castle of the Soldanieri being situated on the opposite side of one of the hills, entirely covered with olive groves and vineyards, which flanked either side of what was then the high road, it was arranged that four of the free-booters should descend to a certain spot, where, the road making a sudden bend, a party of horsemen must inevitably lose sight of each other for a moment : that there they should spring out upon the friar, and whoever might be his companion, or companions, and gagging them as a first preliminary if necessary, strip the friar of his cloak and cowl ; and while two of them mounted on horses which were to be ready at hand for the purpose, and followed Ugolino, though at such a distance, as to prevent discovery of the trick as long as might be possible, the others should conduct the friar and his friend to the castle. In case of the disposition of the travelling-party being

different, and that they might have to encounter the soldiers, or even Ugolino himself, instead of, or in addition to the friar, they had a reinforcement in ambush, which would only have required a whistle, as on all such occasions, in those days as well as these, to have come to their assistance. Such, however, was not, as we know, the case ; fortune favoured them in every respect, for, such was the terror of the friar, on seeing four men with black masks, which were then rather a novelty, start out of the ground, as he ever after averred, to seize upon him and his companion Torpé, that, believing them, as he said, to be devils,

“What could I do?” he asked, “but kneel down, and let them take cowl and cloak, and the scapular itself, if they had asked for it?”

Torpé, indeed, though stricken in years like his master, would, as if from habit, have made some show of resistance, but the friar’s agonized exhortation to him, to submit quietly to the will of God, soon counteracted that mechanical effort, and the two were led away, as easy a prey as ever fell to the lot of man.

The ceremony of gagging was not even alluded to ; which Sattarello, perceiving from his hiding-

place, where he watched the scene with glee, that well-nigh betrayed him, he set out on his return to seek Bisiccio, as his passport to Florence; refusing further hospitality from the brigands, the moment he could dispense with it, in the not over-cautious words,—

“No; if I can digest what I have already eaten, of your ill-gotten, though not unpalatable fare, it is more than could be expected of a man that would become honest; but I’ll take care it shall be the last time I partake of your hospitality.”

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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